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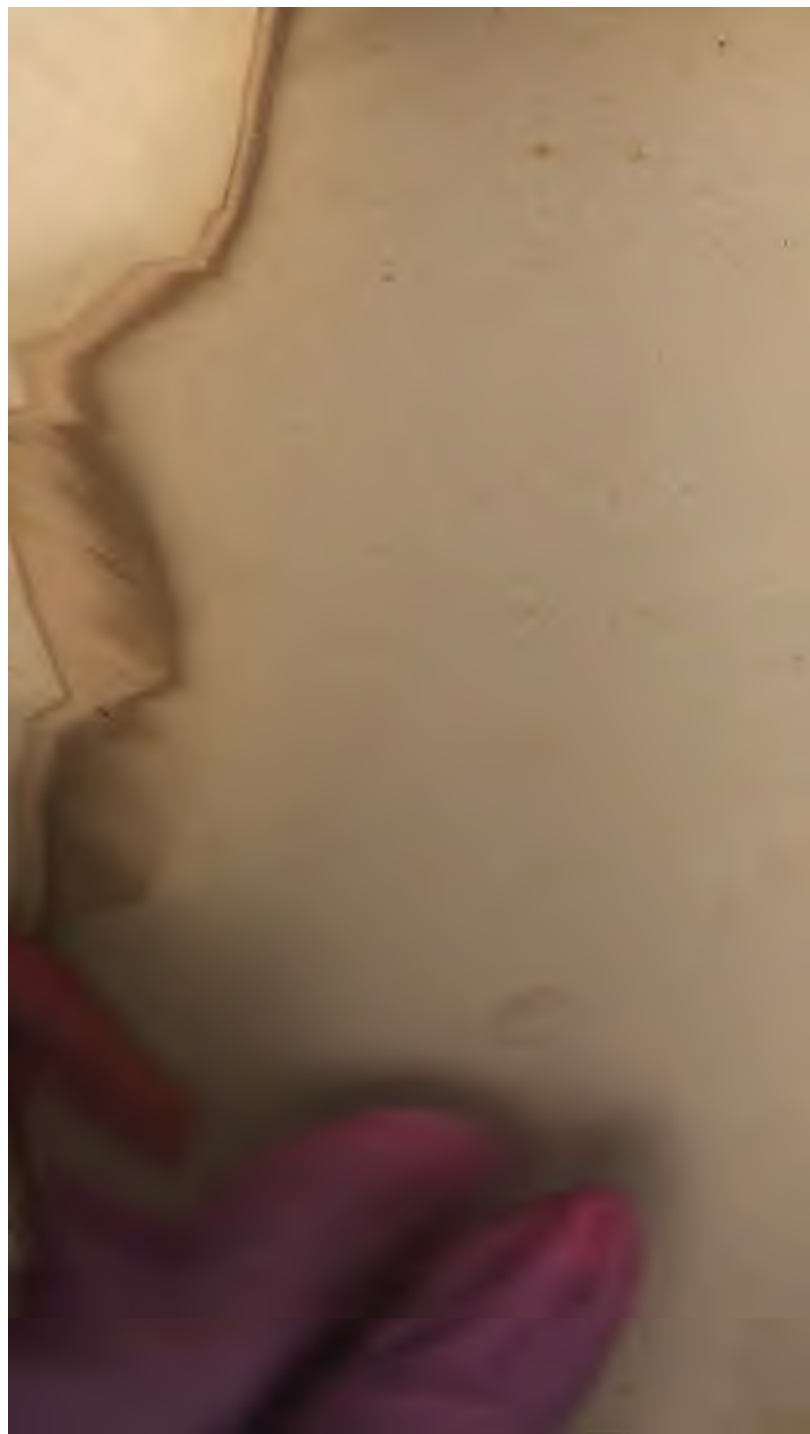
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THE
LIFE OF A BEAUTY.
VOL. I.



THE
LIFE OF A BEAUTY.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

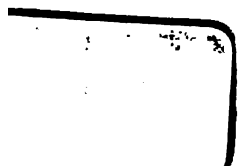
"The Bilt," "The Breach of Promise,"
"Cousin Geoffrey," "The Marrying Man," "The
Match-maker," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
T. C. NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
72, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH SQUARE.
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THE
LIFE OF A BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH OF A BEAUTY.

Angelina Luxmore was born and bred a beauty! Every one understands what it is to be *born* a beauty, although some weeks (nay, months) must elapse, before even to the fondest eye and most sanguine heart, the little wizen 'wee thing,' red-faced, bald-headed, flat-nosed, and old-looking, can give any great promise of the charms that are to enchant the world.

Still, undiscerned and undiscernable, the germ is there. The most fatal and fascinating of gifts is enclosed in that little bud. It *will* expand into a matchless flower, if born a beauty; if not, it may to outward view be an unsightly weed; but whatever its outward form, to it belong a heart, a mind, a SOUL, and, therefore, however Nurses may triumph, Parents rejoice, and Friends congratulate, we pronounce it a fearful thing to be born a beauty, if, as is too generally the case, that circumstance leads to the being *bred* a beauty too!

What is it then to be bred a beauty? Is it not to be set apart from the cradle as a Priestess of Vanity? To be taught betimes, to dwell and ponder on those charms all female education should induce their possessor to forget? Are not the advantages of a face and form of surpassing loveliness, frequently, by the folly of those around, ruined by those sad and repelling drawbacks, frivolity, egotism, and self-worship?

Alas! alas! among the hosts of single women, whom the coarse world so harshly terms 'Old Maids,' how many owe their joyless fate to that great but unsuspected enemy, their beauty! "She must have been a great beauty—what a wonder she never got a husband!" In that common remark cause and effect go hand-in-hand. She ~~was~~ a beauty—she knew it—how could she but know what she had heard from her cradle—what was repeated before she knew the meaning of the words, repeated, with many a hug and exulting caress by the proud and silly mother, re-echoed by the sillier father, broadly asserted by the nurse-maid, with every new bit of finery; insinuated into the little head with the first plume stuck into the white beaver hat, and conveyed to the little heart with the first gaudy sash and glittering necklace.

Yes, that sad, subdued, and disappointed 'old maid,' with what the French so graphically call "*de si beaux restes*," with such fine features, such an air of command, and yet such

a look of desolation, but for her once brilliant beauty, she might now be a fond and cherished wife, living her own youth over again in that of her children, glorying in her daughter's modest charms and her son's manly virtues and attainments.

There is nothing so unlovely as selfishness, and nothing, generally speaking, so selfish as a woman bred a beauty. No homage suffices, no conquest contents her. She cannot love, and those who cannot love, cannot long be loved; they may enthrall the senses for a time, but the heart they have so easily won they as easily lose.

And now to our heroine Angelina Luxmore, who as we have said had the misfortune to be born and bred a beauty.

Her mother, the Honourable Mrs. Luxmore, who might have counteracted the disadvantages of her daughter's heritage, and by judicious care have converted the costly but dangerous possession into a blessing, had herself, alas! been

bred a beauty!—not a beauty of the rare and surpassing kind Angelina promised to become, but quite pretty enough to be very much courted, petted, and spoilt—pretty enough to have learnt to look on beauty as the chief good, and as an all-powerful means to what she considered the great end of woman's life—a good, or rather a grand match. She was a beauty of the days of short waists, tufted crops, tasteless and eccentric fashions—when England being at war with France, (*cradle of la mode*) and therefore having no good model to guide her daughters, daring English-women invented hideous and fantastic disguises, which imitative English-women followed. And any Beauty who had a spark of originality or taste in dress, found those qualities avail her more in establishing her as a belle, than even fine features or a delicate bloom!—days, too, when vaccination was not as general as it is now; when half the women of England were more or less disfigured by the small-pox; and when those who had escaped this arch foe

to beauty, stood out in bright relief, and gained for moderate charms, more admiration than the most brilliant ones can command, now that beauty is as common as the wild flowers of our land.

Now the Honourable Mrs. Luxmore, the mother of our heroine, she too in her turn was the daughter of a beauty—a proud Scotch beauty—a beauty of the days of high heads, high heels, and high notions—a beauty of the days of curtsies and cotillions, patches, periwigs, and point lace, sacques, snuff-boxes, and solitaires—days of majesty and minuets—when beauty's triumph was to conquer, where now she more humbly seeks to win. With a long pedigree and a short purse, the old Lady Grigor Mc.Grigor of Grigor came at the earnest solicitation of her son-in-law, the Honourable Mr. Luxmore, to take up his abode with her only daughter, his wife and himself—and this he did, no one, not even his own wife, knew why, but certainly not because the proud

and haughty old dowager was agreeable to himself. During a short stay in Edinburgh, he saw, that (with her small jointure) to live in the style she had been accustomed to, was almost impossible—and as she was too properly proud to run in debt, and too foolishly so to retrench in outward style and parade, he quickly discovered that she painfully stinted herself in all articles of private and personal comfort, in order to appear to the eye of the world in a manner which she thought worthy of a daughter of the house of Maxwell, and the widow of Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor of Grigor. Under the pretence of delicate health, a cup of beef tea (he found) was often her own dinner, that she might be able to feed (with all the beef and beer such domestic cormorants require) the tall footman, who walked behind her with his long gold-headed stick, powdered hair, and hot-house bouquet; and actively and zealously did the proud old Leddy herself and

her confidential woman, Mistress Beckie Mc. Muir, turn and scour and remake Lady Mc. Grigor's own fast fading dresses, in order that her Laddyship's ain '*mon*' might be supplied with the two mulberry coats, trimmed with silver lace, the two light blue plush waistcoats and pairs of unhintables he had bargained for yearly.

During a brief stay in Edinburgh, Mr. Luxmore discovered many of his mother-in-law's sacrifices at the shrine of hereditary pride and respect for modern opinions; he calculated that the same small jointure on which it was so difficult for her to live in her own house, would be ample for her personal expenditure, if she came to live with him.

He proposed this plan to Mrs. Luxmore—a selfish, egotistical beauty; even a mother's trials had almost escaped her, but a mother's lamentations had often wearied her preoccupied ear; with too little heart to feel deeply the consi-

deration and kindness of her husband, she had yet tact enough to assume a becoming and touching thankfulness. At any rate her mother's conversation and letters would not be full of lamentation and indirect reproach! True, for some unknown reasons, she did not covet the constant presence in her household, of the haughty, plain-spoken, authoritative old dowager, her all-seeing tire-woman Beckie Mc. Muir, and her expensive valet, but the disadvantages of having her mother with her, were less than those of having her living on a small jointure in discontent and anger; and so when Mr. Luxmore proposed the arrangement, the beauty took out her handkerchief, drew near her husband, hid her oval face on his shoulder, murmured, "Thank you, dearest and best!" and pressed with a little ruby lip, his wan white hand.

This little scene took place when Mrs. Luxmore had been five years a wife, and when Angelina was only the loveliest little girl of

four years old a proud father ever fondled, a prouder mother ever decked out, of a silly nurse ever poisoned at once with sugarplums and flattery. The result was that Mr. Luxmore, then with his lady at an hotel in Edinburgh, where to avoid putting the old Liddy to trouble and expense, he went, with the excuse of being near the law courts—that Mr. Luxmore, I say, should wait on Lady Grigor Mc.Grigor, and press upon her an invitation to take up her abode with her only daughter.

It would seem only natural that on such an excursion Mrs. Luxmore should have joined her husband; but a flower show was to take place that morning, where Mrs. Luxmore expected to be thought “herself a fairer flower.” A new dress and bonnet, exquisitely becoming, were prepared for herself, and the little Angelina had a fanciful costume for the occasion.

So Mrs. Luxmore pleaded her sensitive



feelings, as an excuse for not joining her husband ; and he, beguiled by her cunning, fascinated by her beauty, and deceived by her fondness, set out alone to encounter the old dowager.

CHAPTER II.

A RETROSPECT.

There was some little excuse for the beautiful Mrs. Luxmore's indifference to her mother, the old Leddy Mc.Grigor, in the fact that in her daughter's childhood that mother had been the reserved, distant, and somewhat harsh parent of the old school, and in her girlhood the daughter had been educated entirely away from home.

A mistaken wish to eradicate the little Scotch accent, which after all has from the lips of beauty a wild peculiar charm, had caused Sir

Grigor Mc.Grigor of Grigor to send his daughter to a small and select London boarding school, as soon as she had completed her tenth year. As railroads were then not even dreamt of, and travelling was hazardous, tedious, and very expensive, the daughters of the Scotch nobility and gentry, sent to the South for the benefit of masters, generally passed the vacations at school, and remained there till they were pronounced '*finished*.' Finished indeed! a little French, a smattering of Italian, music by note, and not to be thought of without a book, nor drawing without a master's finishing touches, opera dancing, coquettish graces, and frippery fancy-works—these formed the '*finishing off*' of young ladies of those days; dear, useful, domestic needlework was disdained, and all solid reading considered a waste of time.

No wonder that there the lovely and only child of Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor, naturally vain and cunning, grew up shallow and heartless. With no natural object of affection

near—surrounded by girls who envied her for her beauty, her affections centered in herself. She remembered her parents only as the stiff and stern controllers of her childhood; and as a little hereditary Scotch thrift might be found in the mental composition of the young beauty, so when she began to suspect that she would have little or no fortune, except her face, she resolved to make the best of that heritage.

Miss Mc.Prudie, the head of the small and select establishment where Robina Mc.Grigor was placed, was a spinster of ancient family, whose parents having died insolvent, her friends set her up as a schoolmistress. As she prospered, took none but young ladies of good family, and never asked favours, so many of her parents' former friends invited her, with a few of her pupils, particularly during the vacations, to parties and to pic-nics.

It had happened more than once, that at such parties, her young charges had made important conquests; nay, twice or thrice a hus-

band had been secured to the young pupil, and a subject of boast and triumph to the old governess. Often in moments of unbending good-humour had the usually stiff Miss Mc.Prudie, while heading the tea table at which sate twelve blooming, hoping, and aspiring girls, lent sweetness and flavour to the weak solution of bohea by accounts of how Miss Mc.Ivor, through going to a pic-nic with her, had made a conquest of a nobleman; and how Miss Mc.Stint, without a penny for her tocher, had married a Nabob.

As she spoke, what visions of future glory peopled the dark prison room for some—what dreams of golden wealth lighted it up for others.

Robina Mc.Grigor's were of both, and earnestly did she try to please Miss Mc.Prudie, that when next she had the privilege of taking a pupil to a party, she might be that one.

The long-looked-for time came, and came too when Robina Mc.Grigor, then sixteen and a

half, had only six months more to remain at Miss Mc.Prudie's.

It was an invitation to both a pic-nic and a ball, given by the Honourable Colonel Stuart in honour of his daughter's wedding.

Miss Mc.Prudie had not taken Miss Mc. Grigor out before; she awaited a favourable opportunity, and wished her to shine as a novelty as well as a beauty. The colonel's wealth and high connexions made this a capital chance, and Miss Mc.Prudie made one happy, and eleven jealous hearts, by announcing her intention of taking Miss Mc.Grigor; and by pompously sending for milliner, mantua-maker, and shoemaker, to equip the young lady to the greatest advantage.

CHAPTER III.

RETROSPECT CONTINUED.

The morning of Robina Mc.Grigor's *début* was gloriously fine. The first of May by the calendar, and by the young school-girl's heart, 1800! The first of May, 1800! On this day did Robina Mc.Grigor awake with the sun, spring out of her little narrow white-curtained bed, of which four similar were placed in the same room, with a small passage between each, just broad enough for a chair, on which each young girl's daily attire was neatly folded up.

Eagerly Robina looked from the window,

and though the prospect consisted of chimney tops and roofs of houses, she knew that the sky was of that deep rich blue which always announces a lovely day. Her own fate seemed to her as cloudless, and she crept back into bed, to sleep till the bell should ring.

At eight o'clock it did ring, waking Robina out of a dream of white veils and orange wreaths, and favours fluttering in the sunny air. Her young companions, reconciled to the preference shown her, and anxious to draw for themselves what amusement they could from the approaching event, were officious in their services. One brushed her abundant auburn hair till it shone like a pheasant's breast; another laid out on one of the little beds all her finery for the day; a third laced her corset; a fourth, in the eager and officious zeal of a school-girl, insisted on putting on the first pair of silk stockings and gay slippers Robina had ever worn. How quaint would those slippers seem now, of plum-coloured kid, bound and sandalled

with blue, and little slashings of blue satin let into the fronts ! Even they could not disfigure the beautiful little foot, and whatever we might think of them now, they were then *d'un gout parfait*. All the young girls brought their little store of ornaments, their coral and cornelian necklaces, their oval pearl brooches, with a glass slab and a mat of some aunt's or uncle's hair ; and one even produced a little pearl sprig for the hair. But Robina knew simplicity in attire was a charm at sixteen, and so she declined all these loans, except one small venetian chain with a little ruby cross.

And how did Robina Mc.Grigor look on this important first of May, 1814 ? Judging by her picture now before us, and allowing for the evil influence of a fashion old enough to be absurd and not old enough to be remarkable, she was a most bewitching creature. Her glossy hair fell to her waist in waves, having been tightly plaited, and then carefully brushed out ; her head was bound by a broad black ribbon—

contrasting well with her white polished forehead.

A white chip Spanish hat, turned up with a plume of white feathers, set off her regular and blooming face. A little scarlet silk jacket and a white leno skirt, with a demi-train, completed her dress; and as a protection from the cold winds of early spring, she had a long pelerine of white satin, trimmed with swansdown; a broad light blue sash, marked her waist, and hung in a rich drapery behind. As she looked into her little mirror, her eyes were dazzling with Pride, Pleasure, and Hope; she laughed she knew not why, begun sentences she did not end, promised to tell all she should have seen, and looked into the box in which her ball dress and all its etceteras were neatly packed up, by some of her school-fellows. How her heart beat as she gazed at the white lace frock open behind to show the white silk slip, the broad white satin sash, the white kid shoes, the pearl necklace, brooch, and bracelets

which her mother had sent up for the occasion—the long white kid gloves, so unlike those, so short and so tastefully trimmed, we wear now. A white rose for her hair, a spangled fan, and a cut glass smelling-bottle, full of otto of rose, with a little silver plate on which were her initials, and which opening on a hinge, betrayed a recess for hair, and a tiny looking-glass—all these treasures neatly done up in tissue paper, were stowed in her own box; and for the first time forsaking her jug of weak tea and her two thick slices of bread and butter, she repaired high in hope to breakfast *tête à tête* with Miss Mc.Prudie in that lady's own sitting-room.

Miss Mc.Prudie, a thin, long-nosed spinster, looking at her beautiful pupil through her spectacles, said, "I think you'll do, Miss Mc.Grigor, if you behave discreetly. I'm na' for putting vanities into young heads, but I may just observe, that it was owing to her modest manners, ready wit, and pleasing figure,

at a pic-nic (to which I took her) that Miss Mc.Ivor made a conquest of the Earl of Feather-head; na' to mention Miss Mc.Stint, who at her first ball captivated Mr. Bullion, a nabob with ten thousand a-year."

Here Miss Mc.Prudie frugally dipped a little tea, with a small silver vine-leaf, out of an old tortoise-shell caddy, and rang for a prim maid, who came in with a copper tea-kettle, painfully bright, and which she daintily seated on the little struggling blue smoke, of a fire, lighted so as not to endanger the bright bars of polished steel.

Robina's heart was too full to allow her to do much justice to the weak tea and singed bread, and seeing this Miss Mc.Prudie remarked that though they were not expected to be at Twickenham in time for the ceremony, they were invited to the dejeuner, at which Miss Mc. Grigor would be able to make up for her present poor breakfast.

Miss Mc.Prudie then retired to complete her

toilette, and the post coming in, drew Robina from the chimney-glass to the perusal of a stiff letter from her august mamma, the Leddy Mc.Grigor. It ran thus:—

My dear daughter Robina,

I take up my pen to express the satisfaction of myself and your papa, at the receipt of your last, and the account you give of your improvement in your various studies. In six months you will return to us, I hope, well completed, and doing credit to the expensive education we have bestowed upon you. On your return I shall resign to you the whole control and management of the needlework, the keeping of the family receipt-book, and the superintendence of the making of all the preserves, comfits, and domestic medicaments. Your father is sadly in want of a set of fine ruffled shirts, but I shall delay them till your return. We are now at Glenlonely, where we shall probably remain for the next few years. Our only near neighbour is Sir Davie Mc.

Dougal, (your father's old friend). As he is a bachelor, and much cheated by his servants, he meditates, I see, taking a help-mate; and though it is not wise to feed up young people with hopes that may never be realized, still I must say, that I think if you return a discreet, canny, forecasting young woman, ready at your needle and quick at figures, there is every chance that Sir Davie will offer to place you at the head of his establishment—an honour your father and myself particularly covet for you. Sir Davie remembers you, he says, a bonnie and blythe little lassie, and indeed has half proposed the match to your father. So try to improve yourself, my dear daughter Robina, and fit yourself for the good fortune that awaits you. We are thankful to see from your letters, my child, that you are na without thrift and forecast, and hae na romantic notions in these matters. Sir Davie is na flaunting lod, but a sensible country laird, a young mon to look weel by the side of his leddy in her

ain coach, in her ain pew, or at the bottom of his ain table—and what can a woman wish for mair? He has given up Edinbro' since his last touch o' the gout—premature, but hereditary—and he now requires a dounce, discreet, stay-at-hame wife to make the auld ha' pleasant in the lang summer days and the lang winter evenings. It is certainly much to be lamented that the worthy laird should so early in life be subject to such a painful disorder; but a' things hae their bright side, and Sir Davie is so very fine a man, sa coorted in female society, and sa popular in Edinbro', that perhaps but for this disease he would na be quite so stay at hame and steady as we could wish. We flatter oursels (Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor and mysel) that our Robina is the very lassie for him; and so with your father's love and mine, and with our united best compliments to Miss Mc.Prudie, I remain, my dear daughter,

Your affectionate mother,

ROBINA MC.GRIGOR OF GRIGOR.

A feeling of intense disgust of the husband and the life thus chalked out for her, filled Miss Mc.Grigor's heart as she read this letter, and while the tears slowly filled her eyes she resolved, if possible, to escape the fate prepared for her, and never to return to Glenlonely (her dreary family abode) as Miss Mc.Grigor. The instincts and habits of her childhood were still busy at her heart, and she remembered her stern, austere parents too well to believe that she should have any chance of escaping this match, if she returned to them unengaged. Filial obedience and parental empire were the mode of that day, as much as the reverse are, alas! of this; and Robina recalled with a shudder, not merely the stout, gigantic, large-faced Sir Davie, but his dreary hall, so far from the haunts of men, where it was evident she would have to pine unseeing and unseen.

She put her mother's letter in her pocket before Miss Mc.Prudie returned, which she did, attired in a scanty nankeen pelisse, richly

embroidered with nankeen braid and frogs, and round a short waist a cord and tassel of nankeen silk. A bonnet of the same material quilted, and with a feather to match, bag, boots and gloves, all of the same material. These, with a silk scarf of the Mc.Prudie tartan, completed the elderly lady's attire, and added to the contrast between her and our radiant Robina.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAIDEN'S RESOLVE.

The glass-coach was at the door, and Miss Mc.Prudie and her charge stepped in. Many blooming faces peeped from the school-room window, but were withdrawn when the thin hand of Miss Twitch, the head teacher, pulled down the blind.

To Robina, the drive, the people, the carriages, everything was interesting, because everything was new; the only drawback was the want of air, Miss Mc.Prudie having a most inconvenient dread of a draught.

While that lady closed her eyes, and fell into a reverie of which **THE PAST** was the subject, Robina, glancing rapidly from one object to another, was full of the Present and the Future.

To both the time seemed short, till they reached Colonel Stuart's villa, a lovely place, on a velvet lawn of emerald green sloping down to the banks of the blue and pellucid Thames, for love of whom the willows seemed to weep for ever and in vain; they bent their green tresses upon his heart, but he glided on for "a' that."

An exclamation of delight and surprise escaped Robina, and caused Miss McPrudie to ask her rather primly what she saw to cause so indiscreet an exclamation.

"Oh, madam!" said the young girl, "do but look at that exquisite equipage—a purple curricule with four such beautiful greys, and two outriders to match—whose is it, I wonder? the liveries are purple and silver—what exquisite taste!"

"It is indeed," said Miss Mc.Prudie, "a brilliant equipage, but remember all emotion is vulgar. Now step out easily and yet cautiously—I see Miss Maxwell going into the cloak-room—she will tell us whose this equipage is."

In the cloak-room Miss Mc.Prudie and Miss Maxwell (old cronies) met. Miss Maxwell was garrulous and glad to tell all she knew.

"Wha's is it, my dear? dinna ye ken? why it's Mr. Luxmore's—his new turn-out. Ah! he's a fine spec for the lassies; if I wor sixteen instead of sixty, he'd na go a begging wi' eight thousand a year. A hall in Berkshire, a house in St. James's, and a shooting box in Scotland—nay, my bonny Miss Mc.Grigor, that's gude hearing, isn't it?"

"But what sort of man is he himself?" timidly asked Robina.

"Oh, for himself, he's just a little crumpled sort of a body—he's awry in the back and the broost, and his face is na that straight either; but they say he's the heart of a prince and the

head of a sage—and as it's whispered he's on the luke out, the lassies are a pulling caps for him; but he's hard to please, I ween, for here he's a bachelor still at forty-five!"

"Forty-five!" thought Robina, "forty-five and seventeen and a half! but then that equipage, a house in St. James's, a hall in Berkshire—surely this were better than Sir Davie Mc.Dougal with his thousand a year, his old castle, his gout, and the constant domination of my own parents—I WILL be *Mrs. Luzmore*, if I can.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEJEUNER.

When Miss Mc.Prudie and her lovely pupil entered the drawing-room, they found the company just returned from church, and about to repair to the marquee pitched on the velvet lawn, which sloped down to the Thames, and where the dejeuner was spread, glittering with gorgeous plate, and gay with fragrant flowers.

Although on the *entrée* of our friends, the company were gathered round the bride, (whom they recognised at once by her white veil, her orange wreath, and her April face, half smiling,

half tearful), yet Robina saw she excited some interest and drew away some attention from the new-made wife.

Two gentlemen particularly, who were standing in the embrasure of a window, seemed struck and even fascinated by Robina's appearance. The one was a tall, splendidly proportioned young man, with the form of Achilles and the delicate features and bloom of Adonis ; he was in the uniform of the Guards, and his brilliant and becoming dress set off his noble and remarkable beauty to the greatest advantage. He bent good-humoredly, as he talked and laughed, to suit the convenience of his companion—a small pale man, sadly deformed, for one leg was shorter than the other, and though not hump-backed, his figure seemed twisted strangely ; the distortion of his form had extended itself a little to his face, drawing one eye and one eyebrow out of the straight line with the other. In spite of this, there was something interesting in his appearance ; his forehead, pale and massive,

bespoke intelligence ; his dark eyes were full of melancholy tenderness, and when a smile parted his pale lips, even the handsome young Captain Fitzgeorge, his companion, could not rival the beauty of his teeth and the expression of his smile.

Robina blushed beneath his earnest gaze, for she felt it must be Mr. Luxmore.

After the usual courtesies had passed between our new comers, the host and hostess, and the bride and bridegroom, while parties were being arranged for the *dejeuner*, and introductions were rapidly taking place—Miss Mc.Prudie found a moment to whisper into Robina's ear: "The little crooked bodie is Mr. Luxmore, worth eight thousand a year, and a marrying man ; the showy Captain is a male flirt, with little besides his pay, unless it's some thousands of debt."

At this moment the two beaux in question came up to our ladies, Captain Fitzgeorge making sure of the new beauty, and Mr. Lux-

more modestly contenting himself with Miss Mc.Prudie, looking upon her as the Persian earth in the fable—"She was not the rose, but she had dwelt near her." He thought too from the elderly chaperon he should learn all he wished to know about her young charge, and perhaps by escorting her link himself to the party.

However, scarcely had Colonel Stuart hastily named our beaux, than Robina, pretending to be mistaken, but well aware what she was doing, took Mr. Luxmore's arm, and Miss Mc.Prudie clutched the handsome guardsman's. Politeness to Miss Mc.Prudie forbade any expression of delighted triumph in the one, and angry annoyance in the other beau, beyond what their countenances involuntarily betrayed. A pink flush rose to the very brow of Mr. Luxmore, and a sulky pout and angry frown distorted the handsome face of the Captain.

However, to console himself, he managed that Robina should be seated between himself

and Mr. Luxmore, Miss Mc.Prudie being placed on his other side.

How much like enchantment was this brilliant scene to the young school-girl; every sense was gratified to ecstasy. It was a 'May day' worthy of the olden time, when May was a Queen! A soft breeze, redolent of spring and opening buds, fluttered the canvass of the marquee, played with beauty's curls, and freshened her cheeks, while on the blue Thames, full in view, it filled the sunny sails as if with life, and sported with the verdant ringlets of the willows. The shrubberies were literally a 'wilderness of sweets,' the season was a very early one, and the spiral clusters of the lilac, blended with the golden showers of the laburnum, and the snowy balls of the guelder rose, all richly relieved by green of every shade, from the bright young verdure of the larch to the sable hue of the cypress—(which intrudes, alas! into every wreath!)

The band of the —— regiment of guards

played with inspiring energy, the champagne sparkled, and playful attack and playful repartee went round ; then speeches, dear old fashion ! springing from warm hearts, that overflow the lips, began ; the bride and bridegroom, a young, a fond, and bashful pair, were toasted and cheered. Robina, as she caught through the trees a view of their travelling chariot and four, thought it would be a pleasant thing to be a bride—a bride like the one before her, wedded to wealth and rank. She forced her eyes from the gaze of the too handsome Captain, and compelled herself to turn a deaf ear to his insinuating attentions, fast becoming very marked. In debt, and with little but his pay, what could he ever be to her ? and was it probable that such a man, so notorious a flirt, and so admired a rover, would ever dream of offering himself to a dowerless girl.

The remote home in the Highlands, the stern parents, the hopeless monotony, the petty and teasing household cares, regularly recurring

with every recurring day, the plain attire, the frugal table, the early hours, the set of shirts, the odious Sir Davie, and his prim maiden sisters—all these came back upon Robina's thoughts even in the midst of this delicious festival. A something of jealous dejection had stolen over the pale features of Mr. Luxmore, while the brilliant Robina had been engaged in a playful war of words with the handsome Captain; but he smiled when, with a *naïveté* which in a young school-girl was excusable and even pleasing, she said, "Come, as we say in Scotland, 'a silver pennie for your thoughts.'"

"They are not worth even so much, and yet worthless as they are, they have been bought very dear."

"Well, but what are they about? see! I will give you this bunch of violets, tied up by myself, with this bonnie blue ribbon, if without disguise you will tell me what you were thinking of."

There was something so arch and apparently

so innocent in the way in which she made this offer, that Mr. Luxmore, strangely under the influence of female grace and beauty, ventured furtively to press the rosy fingers that held the flowers, and said: "Well then, I was thinking of you."

"Of me!" laughed the delighted damsel, "then how dared ye say your thoughts were not worth a penny."

"I did not say *you* were not worth a penny, sweet one!"

"And if you had, you'd na' hae been that wrong—and yet"— And she bent her head to whisper as if in confidence—"though I am na' worth a penny, and though they've told me that this fine braw officer on my other hand, Mr. Luxmore as they call him, is worth ten thousand a year; yet for a' that, tocherless as I am, if he threw himself and his thousands at my feet, I'd laugh at him for his pains."

"What a curious mistake," thought Mr. Lux-

more; "she fancies he is the rich man, and perhaps that I am the poor Captain in the Guards and in debt; oh if, under this idea, I could awaken the slightest interest in that young and guileless bosom, with what rapture would I bestow my all on her, too happy if in return for my entire devotion she loved me but a little for my wretched distorted self; at any rate she is the first who, without knowing who I am and what I have, has seemed to like to sit by me, and been pleased with my attentions."

Shrewdly from under her bright tresses did the cunning Robina watch the varying colour of the poor deformed one's cheek; at length he said:—

"And who told you your neighbour's name was Luxmore?"

"I heard a lady say so, and say too he was as rich as Cræsus, and had a mansion in St. James's and a hall in Berkshire; and I saw his bonnie curricule and his greys and his outriders, and they're lovely to look upon; but for a' that

braw—— Ah! you smile at my Scotch—I never speak Scotch but when I'm happy—it's the language of my heart.”

“It is an eloquent one to mine—nothing to me is so bewitching as the Scotch accent from such lips.”

Robina had seen this. She proceeded: “Well, then, braw as he is, and rich as he is, he's not to my taste; the consciousness of wealth and of beauty have stamped on his face that conceit which with me would be a sure antidote to love.”

“And yet half the ladies in London are mad after him.”

“It does them no credit then; but maybe it's the money rather than the man; however I'm a puir lassie, and my prospects are sad enough, as you would say if you kenned them, and yet as I said before I'd na guild them with his gowd if I had the offer, which is na likely!”

“What an eloquent, sensible, and natural

creature it is," thought Mr. Luxmore, delighted against his will with any censure of his admired and handsome rival—"and her prospects are sad! Oh, if I were permitted to brighten them, I would repine no more at the fate which has made me so unseemly; for if she could bear to look upon me, deeming me poor and hopeless, I should be fair enough for the sole legitimate object of the loftiest beauty, the winning the first love of one true heart!"

But the happy festival is over, the bride has risen to change her dress, the gentlemen remain at table for awhile, and the ladies repair to the drawing-room.

Captain Fitzgeorge, a little astonished and piqued at Robina's indifference, had engaged in a flirtation with a sister of the bride; he scarcely noticed Robina as she rose, but Mr. Luxmore gazed at her with an interest which he fancied her fine eyes reciprocated.

"The violets are yours," she said, "and it's not very gallant of you to let them lie there!"

"Nay, they are so like a fairy gift, I almost dread to touch them, lest they vanish and leave me desolate," he said, raising them to his lips, and when Robina was out of sight, pressing them to his throbbing heart.

"If you were a few years older, and a good deal steadier, you might be Mrs. Luxmore, I'm thinking," said Miss Mc.Prudie, when she and her pupil were together and alone. "And that would be to beat Miss Mc.Ivor and Miss Mc. Stint—for Lord Featherhead was a poor nobleman, and Mr. Bullion had nothing but his wealth to recommend him; he had na birth, while Mr. Luxmore is both of high family and of great possessions."

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXCURSION.

The ladies amused themselves unheeded till the bride was ready to depart, and then all the company assembled, as if eager to rob her of the few minutes she might yet have spent weeping on her mother's bosom or in her father's arms. She was a slight and girlish creature, and had never left her home before. No marvel that the tears poured down her pale cheeks; but when the bridegroom came and whispered some fond word in her ear, the blush and the smile returned. In the fashion of that

day, she was dressed for the wedding journey in a habit and riding hat turned up in front with a plume of feathers ; quaint as we should think such a figure now, it was the *ne plus ultra* of elegance then.

"It seems to me," said her weeping mother to an old friend, "as if I never knew half her loveliness or half her worth till this day ; how beautiful she looks !"

"Yes, blessings brighten as they take their leave," replied the gentleman, and added (being what is commonly called a Job's comforter), "I can never see why parents make a daughter's wedding a festival—to me it seems little better than a funeral."

"Oh, do not say so ! I will believe that I have not lost a daughter, but that I have gained a son."

"Ah, so they told *me*, when my only child married Major Martinet ; but it's all cant—you lose your child almost as much when she wears a wedding veil as when she is wrapt in a

shroud ; and as for gaining a son ! a son and a son-in-law are very different things I can tell you. There is a great deal more of the law than of the son in such intercourse—oh, you'll find it out some day. The marriage peal or the funeral knell, they are much the same to my ear."

" But our darling will live so near us !"

" Only the more tantalizing—mine began by settling near *us* ; but her husband was jealous of every hour she spent with us, and she, poor thing, felt at once she was a daughter and a wife—(two characters very hard to reconcile) ; the struggle in her bosom made her quite ill—then came discontent, and at first covert, and then open jealousies between him and me—she sometimes siding with the one, sometimes the other ; by degrees he got to disparage and ridicule (indirectly but intelligibly enough) me, my habits, opinions, pretensions, &c. &c. Of course she at all risks defended her father, then I in my turn censured and sneered at him, and

of course the poor child, whom between us we, (fools as we were) nearly killed with our jealous love, became her husband's champion; at last Martinet and I came to words—I forswore his house and he mine—my poor girl only visited us by stealth. At last he was ordered to India; he insisted on her going with him—I objected, as I really feared the climate would kill her. However she was *his*, not mine—he was a son-in-law—the *law* was on his side, and she went—there she pines in languid pomp, for her old father's true and tried affection. No wonder knell and bell are much the same to my ear and my heart!"

Col. Dunkeld took out his handkerchief and turned away.

The young Lady Vane (the bride), leaning on the arm of her bridegroom, Sir Jasper Vane, was making her last adieus.

As she fondly embraced her mother, Col. Dunkeld's words were still ringing in Mrs. Stuart's ears; with poignant anguish she strained

her daughter to her heart, but took a farewell of her son-in-law so cold, and so constrained, that it hurt the feelings of both the wedded and jealously devoted lovers, and caused the rapturous ejaculations and anticipations of happiness with which they now and then broke the silent entrancement of their wedding tour, to be frequently darkened by doubts of what "Mrs. Stuart could mean, and how he could have offended her" from the Bridegroom—and earnest assertions that "after all it must be fancy, and mamma could mean nothing, she who was so fond of her Jasper"—from the pretty Bride.

But it did mean a good deal, and often do the discontented and inconsiderate, wantonly scatter the seed which brings forth bitter fruits and poison flowers.

To the chief part of the company the departure of the bride and bridegroom was the principal object of interest, and they clustered and crowded together, waving hands, hats,

and handkerchiefs, until the bride had retired into a corner of the chariot and the bridegroom had pettishly pulled down the blind in the faces of a village mob assembled at the gates.

All this while Robina, who took no personal interest in the young couple, was planning how she might convert herself into the centre of so much interest and notice, namely, a Bride! and Mr. Luxmore was thinking that he should feel no envy of Sir Jasper Vane, if he could set out on such a tour with the young and brilliant being at his side.

“What is the plan for the day?” asked Captain Fitzgeorge, who began to weary of conversation, and wanted the excitement of doing something. “Are we not going to drive to Windsor? Come, my dear fellow,” he said, addressing himself to Mr. Luxmore, “come, you’re the man to set them going; do see about it—I’m sure you’ve sate there quite long enough.”

“I don’t think so,” laughed Mr. Luxmore;

"I'm quite content;" and he glanced at Robina, who smiled as if to say, "So am I." Emboldened by this, Mr. Luxmore said, "I suspect you want there to be a *mêlée* and a scramble, in the hopes that you may gain something by it."

"'Pon honour, you're right, and you dread it, lest you should lose the only thing worth having in the room," he added *sotto voce*, but loud enough for Luxmore and Robina to hear him.

To Captain Fitzgeorge the difficulty of obtaining a smile or a word from Robina, made her fifty times more interesting to him than the most devoted attention could have done. And so he stood for some time fixing his fine eyes upon her, and showing off, as he thought, all the graces of his form and face; but in vain. Robina, like many other women, was in less danger from the *attentions*, than she would have been from the *indifference*, of so very handsome a man. The little coquette was not piqued into

any effort to win his homage ; it was offered, and so she felt a sort of pride in showing she could scorn what others so panted to win.

After some time spent in fruitless gazing and attitudinizing, Fitzgeorge suddenly exclaimed : "Pon honour, this is dull work ; I shall go and see what's to be done ; active service for me—where's the Colonel ?"

At this moment the Stuart family, who for half an hour had been too much affected by the first wedding in their family, to join in mirth or promote amusement, came in pale and a little dejected to propose an excursion to Windsor.

"Come, gentlemen, offer your services—and, ladies, chuse your knights," said the Colonel—(a noble, martial-looking man, who though he had grown grey in the service, had just wiped away a tear at losing his daughter.) "Come, right about march!" he cried, clapping his hands, and assuming a gaiety he did not feel.

"May I have the honour of driving you, Miss Mc.Grigor?" said Mr. Luxmore eagerly,

just as Fitzgeorge lounged up to prefer the same request.

Robina bowed assent, and Captain Fitzgeorge, turning on his heel, engaged Miss Stuart to accompany him, who agreed with a toss of the head, for she had seen his defeat—but in her heart she loved him, and was glad to go with him even on these terms.

Robina affected a start of surprise when Mr. Luxmore led her to his curricule. •

“Is not this Mr. Luxmore’s carriage?”

“And what if it is, fairest lady?”

“Has he lent it to you?”

“No, but I will drive you in this.”

“I would rather go in any, however humble of your own.”

“This *is* my own, sweet girl! and *I* am Mr. Luxmore!”

“Oh, how can you forgive me my absurd mistake?”

“It were much easier than to *forget* you—are you comfortably seated?”

"Oh delightfully—what a perfect equipage!"

"It seems so to me *now*!"

And what with the gay outriders, the rapid motion, the pomp and pride of the moment, Robina felt a sort of liking for one who could perpetuate so much enjoyment; and as while they gaily dashed along, the country people curtsied to the ground, and even the gentry gazed on with lively admiration, Mr. Luxmore looked into the upraised eyes of the delighted Robina—she blushed, grew pale, and dropped her glance beneath the first glance of passionate love she had ever met!

"Dearest and loveliest!" murmured Mr. Luxmore, and he sank into a blissful reverie, bright with the hope of being loved by Youth, Virtue, and Beauty for himself alone!

CHAPTER VII.

THE RIVALS.

Whenever Captain Fitzgeorge's gig came up with Mr. Luxmore's curricie, a few words of half playful bitterness passed between the gentlemen, and the handsome Captain glanced at Robina with a look, half resentment and half contempt. To revenge herself, Robina took a sort of pride in making her cavalier distance the Captain—an easy task with his fresh first-rate horses, opposed to a heavy roadster, already tired.

Mr. Luxmore took a great delight in meeting the sportive wishes of his youthful companion, and perhaps felt a little pride, for the first time, (poor fellow!) in the great advantages of wealth. A light summer shower had laid the dust and freshened the bright green trees; the drive through the exquisite forest was fragrant with opening buds, and vocal with the hymeneal songs of the newly wedded birds—birds, who as yet had no clamorous and exacting young ones to sadden their little parent hearts!

The noble stag and the timid doe bounded across the velvet sod; and when contrasted with so much joyous and vernal freshness of scenery, the grand old time-worn Castle rose to the view; mingling with all the beauty of the Present, all the romance and historic interest of the Past, the sensitive and poetical feelings of Mr. Luxmore, united to the exquisite sense of dawning love—sent the tears to his eyes,

and almost unconsciously he clasped Robina's hand. She did not withdraw it, and from that moment he inwardly vowed to devote his life to her and her alone !

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DECLARATION.

For some hours the company strayed about the Castle, and as the royal family—the good old King and his Queen, and noble princes and princesses) were all at Weymouth, they saw all the marvels and beauties of Windsor at their ease.

Mr. Luxmore never left Robina's side—and certainly his talents as a cicerone rendered her visit to the Castle doubly interesting. At Miss Mc.Prudie's she had been whirled through a course of English history, but she was sur-

prised *now* to find what a mere nothing she knew of so interesting a study. Mr. Luxmore had a legend for every turret, tower, chamber, and picture; and the more interested Robina grew in his stories of the past, the more interesting did he contrive to render them.

Captain Fitzgeorge, who, just because he saw he was not wanted, could not bear to be away, contrived to follow and dodge them about, the jealous and pouting Miss Stuart leaning on his arm. She was perhaps, critically speaking, as handsome as Robina, but he had won her admiration, and he was (as most coxcombs are) indifferent, indifferent in his pursuit of beauty and love, to all but the exciting pleasures of the chase.

His great object seemed to be, to place himself every now and then, so that Robina must confront at once his superb figure and beautiful face, and that of the small, pale, and insignificant Luxmore, who, with one shoulder much above the other, his neck awry, and poised as

it were on one leg very much shorter than its fellow, formed as striking a contrast in all external charms to the Adonis of the day, as that very vain person could desire.

To a woman of heart and feeling—to one who could look beneath the mere surface—the contrast would not have been in Captain Fitzgeorge's favour. His brow boasted little but its physical beauty, his eyes little but that animal lustre an ox might have rivalled him in, and conceited and vapid ejaculations were all that proceeded from his fine mouth with its black moustachio.

But Mr. Luxmore's pale and even sallow forehead was of the most intellectual conformation, and though the hair that shaded it was thin, and partly grey, the mind found a charm there, denied to Fitzgeorge's smooth white brow, crowned with its jetty and hyacinthine locks.

Mr. Luxmore's eyes and smile, and even his attitude, modest and shrinking with the consciousness of his personal defects, all would have

had a spell for a woman of heart and mind ; but Robina was not that woman. She *would* not look at the handsome Captain, but only because she felt, if she looked she were lost—lost, as far as the power of accepting Mr. Luxmore went ; but in the bosom of seventeen, Robina had the heart of a scheming matchmaker of sixty.

Mr. Luxmore saw that the Adonis vainly tried to draw away Robina's attention from himself, and in his heart of hearts he blessed her.

And who could have suspected guile in a young school-girl, out for almost her first holiday ? Not a credulous worshipper of beauty like Mr. Luxmore ; he could not conceive that nature could bestow at once, a face so open, and a heart so close ! He knew little of women, except the regular husband-hunters, by whom he had been all but deceived, and whom he now dreaded and shunned. A more experienced observer would have told him that tact, and cunning, and ambition show themselves in *the*

nursery, and that some girls seem born women of the world.

Then, too, though Robina had not enjoyed the common and recognised advantages for perfecting the character of a schemer, she had had some uncommon ones, which, being quite unsuspected, were not likely to tell against her. In her earliest childhood, except when at rare intervals she was summoned to the presence of parents, whose very sternness made her sly, she was thrown entirely among servants, and we all know how much the ignorant and dependent cultivate every species of cunning. If a parent would have a child adorned with that greatest moral jewel, candour, let that parent make the child (as much as possible) his constant companion, and never suffer himself out of caprice or ill temper to intimidate, nor out of expediency to deceive, the sensitive, all-believing, all-trusting child.

All-trusting and all-believing as it is, the spirit of inquiry and comparison grows with its

reason; the first unjust harshness it detects destroys its confidence, and the first falsehood it fathoms annihilates its faith.

All children can be made cunning, but all we fear cannot be made frank, and Robina was one of the latter; and early indeed did she learn to scheme, to fawn, to flatter, and, alas! to lie; and when from that hot-bed of coarse deceit, the nursery, she was sent to a London school, she found herself thrown among a dozen sharp-witted, ambitious, and scheming girls. If the governess and teachers punished *detected* falsehood, and proclaimed the worship of Truth, their own conduct often betrayed that their precepts differed from their practice—that manœuvring (if adroit) and finesse, (if successful) had merit in their eyes.

Then the girls, most of them younger daughters of large ambitious and fashionable families, carried into their own little sphere the worldly notions, schemes, and desires they heard discussed at home between ‘mamma’ and sisters

already 'out.' The confidences of the play-hours were not the innocent unworldly dreams one would have expected, when one saw such bright young heads bent together, till the clustering locks seemed to mingle; the story told with such animated gesture and heightened colour, was not a story of a fairy or a bird, but of some elegant young man seen during the last vacation at Brighton or at Ramsgate, and "probably a nobleman in disguise;" and then came highly coloured accounts of elder sisters' jealousy and spite, and the youth's constant though respectful devotion, till each young bosom burned to be engaged in some similar love affair; and many who had imagination, though unprovided with experience or adventures, presumed to make themselves the heroines of a *story* they hoped ere long to see converted into truth.

With what a kindling eye and burning cheek had the vain, the cunning, and the ambitious Robina listened by the summer twilight to the stories thus told by her school-fellows of their

own clandestine, or some elder sister's acknowledged love affairs! what details of gay weddings, where the young narrator had officiated as bridemaids. What grand accounts of the pomp and wealth displayed by that married sister when seen last in her bridal home!

From eight till eleven, when a teacher came into each dormitory to take up her abode for the night, armed with a scowl, a rushlight and a towering night-cap, and sometimes perhaps with a hidden novel—did these dazzling records, half truth, half fiction, brighten the dim twilight of a London evening—and it was curious to remark that though all the girls were more or less lovely, and in their very first youth, no romantic pictures of love or constancy were dwelt on amongst them; the rank, the estates, the equipage of a lover were minutely described, but little was said of what he was; and so the bride was dressed from her orange wreath to her white satin slipper, much was said of how she *looked*! but nothing of how she loved!

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It was natural that it should be thus, with those who spent their vacations with match-making mammas, and husband-hunting sisters ; and in listening to her young companions, Robina, naturally a schemer and a coquette, was as much imbued with worldly maxims as if she had been a belle of many seasons, instead of a young school-girl, who had seen nothing of London, but the roofs and backs of houses, from a school-room made out of a back parlour—a girl whose walks were in rank and file, headed by two teachers, before the London world or sun were up, and who had never been at any ball, but the annual exhibition of the dancing-master and his pupils. How different would have been Mr. Luxmore's sensations could he have formed any idea of the nature of his companion's feelings, and the style of her education. He thought to himself, a young Scotch girl, almost a child, and brought up by that demure, discreet, old-fashioned Miss Mc. Prudie—a lily of the valley could not be more

pure—a bird of the woods could not be more unworldly. I wonder what she meant when she said her prospects were sad enough, (as I should own if I knew all ;) if she is poor, I can make her rich ; if she is dependent, I can make her free. If she is unhappy, I can make her glad ! Oh, if I dared to ask her ! but it is so much to stake at once !

Robina and Mr. Luxmore were standing, gazing at the celebrated picture of ‘the Misers.’

“ Ah, love will still be lord of all,” said Mr. Luxmore, looking tenderly into the upraised eyes of his young companion.

“ Nay,” laughed Robina, “ not of ‘the Misers’ surely.”

“ Yes, even of ‘the Misers ;’ what says the song ?

“ What is it makes the aged miser
Ev’n forsake his hoarded treasure ?
Oh, ’tis love, ’tis love, ’tis love.”

But I alluded to the story of that picture.”

“ A story—oh, do tell it me !”

"Sweet child!" sighed Lummox, deceived by her artless manner; "well, that picture was painted by a young blacksmith, who fell in love with a painter's daughter, and I believe was loved again. The father, resolved his child should marry one of his own profession, refused the lover, telling him he would never give his daughter to any man who could not produce a fine picture. The blacksmith went his way."

"Poor fellow," said Robina.

"Nay, not so poor, he had Hope, he had that energy that Love and Hope bestow—he was seen no more for years—at length a picture was exhibited—the world flocked to gaze and applaud—among the rest the father! "A noble picture indeed," he said to his pale girl. "Would you give me to the man who could paint that picture, father?" she asked timidly. "Gladly, proudly, girl, for that is the work of a Master!" he replied. She looked round—the blacksmith was there—years of solitude and love-prompted labour had enabled him to produce that picture.

A message had apprized the faithful "maiden of his bosom" of his toils and his hopes. The father joined their hands. That picture—look at it, Robina—that picture was *The Misers*."

"Oh, I could look at it for ever," she said.

"As I could at you! Robina, I am not, like you, in the first flower of youth, and nature has cast me in an unsightly mould, but I have a heart capable of all the wild, the passionate, the deep devotion of that poor blacksmith. Could its love, its deep and ardent love atone to you, Robina, for the absence of all those charms Nature has so lavished upon you? Tell me, with that rare and sweet simplicity, that almost childish frankness, which among all your beauties is to me the fairest—tell me what you feel, tell me whether you think you ever could love me well enough to be mine, mine all, mine only, mine for ever!"

Robina blushed and hesitated; she was a coquette by instinct and in theory, but as yet she was not a practised coquette.

"It is so sudden," at length she murmured.

"It is," he replied, "and so is the love that prompts it—sudden and perhaps distasteful—I might have guessed it."

He drew her to a window ; they looked upon some of the party preparing to depart, and the carriages collected there.

Captain Fitzgeorge was standing by his somewhat shabby gig, and the elegant equipage of Mr. Luxmore, his matchless horses, dashing liveries, and outriders, were near him.

Mr. Luxmore thought not of them ; he pointed to Fitzgeorge, who in one of the graceful attitudes so common to perfect beauty, (whether in man or woman), was gazing up at the window where they stood, with a smile showing his fine teeth.

"There, Robina," said Mr. Luxmore, "there are a face and form to win the love I had begun to covet ; had I the person of Fitzgeorge, you would not have said so coldly, 'It is so sudden !' "

“No,” replied Robina, who had been examining, not the two lovers, but their two equipages, and who now began to fear the sensitive Luxmore might withdraw his proposals—“no, for had he presumed so to address me, I should not have answered in a way you unjustly call so coldly—I should *warmly* have resented what, from a person I do not like and have not encouraged, would have been very disagreeable to me!”

“Is it possible? dare I believe what those words imply? am I indeed unjust in saying you spoke coldly—and would such a declaration from one possessed of all I lack and covet have been indeed less welcome? Oh, Robina, do not trifle with me—you know not what the hope of being loved by one like you, and for myself alone—you know not what delirious joy it is—and you know not what the disappointment of such a hope, if once indulged, will be—tell me, and tell me truly, for *now* I could bear it better than *later*, can you love me with that love

which the instincts of your woman heart tell you I pine for?"

"I like you better than any one else already," faltered Robina, "and I think in time I should love you, if you loved me as you promise; but you are so impetuous—you give me no time."

"Enough, Robina, you have said enough—enough to make me richly blest; I cannot expect from you—the Beautiful, the Young, the Gifted—that ready and lavish tenderness, I, poor cripple, unseemly and past the age of illusions, am eager to implore you to accept. No, no, with your modest and virgin preference, so sweetly, so touchingly conveyed, I am indeed content; say then, I may do my poor best to win you—say you will be mine."

"Oh, all this time," said Robina, as if suddenly remembering herself, "beguiled by your beautiful words, I have quite forgotten that in her last letter, mamma tells me papa has affianced me to his dear friend Sir Davie Mc.

Dougal, and that I must prepare on my return to receive him as a suitor."

"And do you like him?"

"Like him! I have not seen him since I was ten years old. I am sure I did not like him then, and I feel I should hate him now." And she pouted.

"Is he rich?"

"Yes! he has a thousand a year."

Mr. Luxmore felt reassured.

"That is not very rich, Robina," he said; "but you, sweetest, know little of these matters; leave it to me to address Miss Mc.Prudie and your parents, and when your father talks of affiancing you to Sir Davie Mc.Dougal, tell him your own heart has affianced you to another—will you, dearest?"

"I will."

Luxmore caught her to his bosom in a fond embrace; and when he handed the young coquette into his curricule, she felt a triumphant consciousness, not that she had won a good and

noble heart, but that she would soon be the sovereign lady of curricie, outriders, servants, eight thousand a year, and alas ! last and least, Mr. Luxmore.

And here we must pause one moment to observe, that he, who in his middle age fell so easily into the snare of this young coquette, would probably have been caught in early life by some more practised manœuverer, (for the world is full of Robinas) had he then been considered worth the catching. But till a short time before he met Robina he had been as much shunned as a detrimental, as he was then courted as a 'catch.' He came unexpectedly and suddenly into his fortunes and his prospects. He was on his guard against those who had slighted him, but who could suspect Robina?

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHAPERON.

Robina's head was so giddy, her heart so glad, and her eyes so dazzled by her sudden and brilliant prospects, that her drive back to Twickenham seemed rapid and indistinct as a dream. So preoccupied was she by the thought of the envy of her school-fellows, and the admiration of every kind of beau, when she should glitter through a London season with every attribute of wealth and fashion, that she scarcely heard the few passionate and interjectional words of the enamoured Luxmore, and when

they did meet her ear, she answered them at random; but he, poor deceived one! he blessed her in his proud and ardent heart, for a pre-occupation which he traced to love—first, bewildering, all-engrossing love! When they reached Col. Stuart's, the ladies hastened to their rooms to array themselves for dinner and the ball.

Robina blushed and cast down her eyes, as pressing her hand, he said: "Farewell then, my love, for an hour, which will seem an age; you look agitated, my sweet one, but I am too selfish to be able to ask you to lie down and rest, for when I do not see your heavenly smile, and hear your exquisite voice, I am so ingenious a self-tormentor, that I shall fancy it is some cruel tantalizing dream, for how can I believe (save when looking into those truthful eyes) that I can really be Robina's choice." And as he spoke, he looked down upon his fragile and ill-shapen form, with a glance of melancholy self-disparagement, which would have brought

tears to the eyes of any woman who could feel. But if our young coquette could nor feel nor weep, she could sigh and look down, and at the very moment when another would have spoken words of comfort and sympathy, she could tear herself away as if she dared not trust her full, fond heart! As she hurried out of the room Miss Mc.Prudie entered it; she had a sort of presentiment that Mr. Luxmore would request an audience of her, for her practised and keen chaperon eyes had marked his entire and open devotion to her young charge during the whole day. She knew he was a romantic, disappointed man—a worshipper of youth and beauty—generous, wealthy, unexceptionable, (to any lady who could overlook his personal defects) and above all, that he was (though perhaps unaware of it himself,) a marrying man. He was, Miss Mc.Prudie thought, the very person to fall in love at first sight, with a beautiful, blooming, and ambitious young manœverer, such as she shrewdly suspected Robina Mc.

Grigor to be ; and the woman's natural love of match-making, the governess's pride in a pupil's brilliant success, and the excitement of a love affair of her own bringing about, induced Miss McPrudie to hasten to her room, while Robina was flirting with her lover, and promptly arraying herself in her most becoming and imposing attire, to be ready for the communication, she felt sure the honourable and love-smitten Luxmore would make to her. To a man less wildly in love, and less devotedly bent on one subject, Miss McPrudie would have seemed an awful and almost unapproachable person with whom to discuss an '*affaire de cœur*.'

On her head was a turban of McPrudie tartan, which, concocted by herself, was reared into a formidable and almost overhanging crest in front, in which was stuck a silver thistle by way of brooch, out of which sprang a tuft of eagle's feathers—a bunch of reddish hair, matching what her own had been, covered the centre of her low retreating forehead—her

quick eyes were placed very close to a thin aquiline red-tipped nose ; and though her vision was not habitually oblique, yet under the influence of any excitement or emotion, they assumed a most refulgent squint ; her long teeth rested on her upper lip, and her chin retreated.

Her dress for the ball was of a yellowish white silk, in which long years before she had figured as a bridesmaid !—a broad Mc.Prudie tartan sash marked her waist, a scarf of the same covered her shoulders, and a pair of black kid gloves, drawn up to her elbows, completed her attire—save her jewellery, which consisted of a large Scotch pebble brooch, struck adroitly in her bunch of curls—an amber necklace, several mourning rings, and a brilliant pin, containing hair which was supposed to have belonged to the only being who had ever awakened one soft emotion in Miss Mc.Prudie's bosom ; and who—so the school-girls' legend went—having heartlessly deserted her in her youth, when her parents left her a penniless struggler.

with a cold world, had meanly proposed to her in her old age, when industry and Scotch thrift had made her mistress not only of a thriving establishment, but of several thousands in the funds.

Time, however, had darkened Miss Mc.Prudie's heart, and legends said the lover of her youth was haughtily and bitterly repulsed and rejected as her suitor; but with female inconsistency, or perhaps humanity, Mr. Sawnie Gillespie was installed teacher of writing, arithmetic, and Latin grammar to the young ladies of "Bruce House." Thus, at the expense of others, he was saved from actual want; thus, was he ever subjected to the petty tyranny and sarcastic intencoes of her he had despised and forsaken; and here did he visit on his tittering and sharp-sighted pupils the indignation which he dared not betray to his bitter and haughty patroness. While despising and tyrannizing over the abject lover, the first token of a love she had returned and believed in, was secretly

prized by Miss Mc.Prudie, and on occasions of great pomp was restored to the place which forty years before it never quitted, in the little sprigged muslin *fichu*, which, however low her evening attire, completely veiled her charms; whether it was kept in memory of the Past, or because the brooch was really a handsome one, and surrounded by good brilliants, none could ever decide. Perhaps, as most human motives are mixed, it might be both. But often did Mr. Sawnie Gillespie turn to it in his own mind, marvel why, when the lover was rejected, the token was retained, and remembering the twenty golden guineas his father had paid for it, when both parent and son believed Miss Shoozie Mc.Prudie to be an heiress—wish he could recover it from her grasp, and convert it into current coin of the realm.

We digress. Miss Mc.Prudie, attired as we have described, raised by high heels and armed with a large pictured fan, of Cupids and shepherdesses and peeping Damons—stood before

Mr. Luxmore, as, pale with new emotions, and his eyes filled with happy tears, for he had just touched with his lips the rosy fingers of the departing Robina.

Yes, there Miss Mc.Prudie stood in virgin majesty—crest, eagle's plume, curls, all waved while she made Mr. Luxmore a haughty curtsey, fanning herself majestically the while, and fixing on him eyes which, in the penetrating inquiry of their expression, seemed almost to meet in one dazzling squint.

But Mr. Luxmore was not awed by this, which would have paralyzed a modern beau, with his weak mind but half made up. He only saw in Miss Mc.Prudie the guardian of Robina, the being through whom he could obtain the privileges of an accepted lover, and the right of asking her of her parents.

"Madam," he said, approaching her, and bowing low to her formal curtsey, "might I beg the honour of a few moments' conversation."

"Sir," said the lady, "my ear and my time are at your service."

"To avoid interruption, madam, in a conference on which my fate depends, may I lead you into yon inner room?"

"Sir," said Miss Mc.Prudie, "I believe I understand your feelings and fathom your motives, or I might object to such privacy."

At any other moment Mr. Luxmore would have smiled at the absurd, but perhaps instinctive scruples of the maiden lady, but now all eagerness to be heard, he held out his hand to lead her into the further room, and placing hers in it, as if to commence a minuet, she swept along by his side.

CHAPTER X.

THE LOVER AND THE OLD MAID.

Mr. Luxmore eagerly shut the door, and, so much did he dread an interruption, at a moment to him so critical, that he was about to turn the key in the door, when Miss Mc.Prudie laid her long hand, in its loose black kid glove, on his arm, and said :—

“Na, sir, by na means—it’s a censorious world, Mr. Luxmore, and my maxim both for myself and my pupils has ever been, ‘Never excite suspicion,’—and again, ‘Respect appearances if you would be respected’—and——”

"Forgive me, Madam," said Mr. Luxmore, boiling with impatience, "my time is very short."

"It's lang eno' for us to be seated, I hope, sir," said Miss Mc.Prudie, with the tyrannical exercise of power so delightful to little minds, and not without something of that feminine and vague resentment common to women, when, in anxiety about another, courtesy to themselves is lost sight of. An oversight which all lovers who depend at all, on the good offices of a chaperon or a confidante are too prone to commit, and generally have good cause to repent.

Mr. Luxmore, intent on one object only, thought Miss Mc.Prudie an absurd and ceremonious old prude, but dreading any further delay, and fathoming her shallow mind, with its paltry vanity and petty despotism, he handed her, with a low bow, to a chair, and said:—

"I am sure Miss Mc.Prudie will forgive an eagerness which arises from devotion to one of that sex she adorns—one too who, brought up

by her, may fairly be presumed to have acquired some of her virtues and imbibed the feminine dignity of her sentiments."

"Noo, my dear sir," said the lady, "you speak like a rational mon, and noo I am prepared to hear, and, if possible, to aid you!"

Luxmore's full heart prompted him to press Miss Mc.Prudie's hand vehemently, while tears filled his eyes.

"Then, madam, bear with me while I tell you, that I have formed an attachment of the most sincere and fervent nature, for your young pupil Miss Mc.Grigor. My wish is to be allowed to address her as my future bride. My entreaty is, that you will second by your influence the proposals I mean to address to her parents, and till such time as I can hear from them, that you will allow me to wait on the young lady at your house in the character of her suitor!"

Miss Mc.Prudie was in her inmost heart dazzled and delighted, both at this brilliant

offer for her pupil, in which she foresaw many contingent advantages to herself, and also at the immediate interest, amusement, and importance of which such a splendid courtship would be the source.

However, she only firmly said: "It's very sudden, Mr. Luxmore—and Robina's ower young—it's a great responsibility for me, and as I stand at present in the place of the young lady's mother, I'd be glad to ken, in case I did agree (which is doubtful) what settlements you'd be for making; Robina Mc.Grigor has little or naething hersel."

"She has everything I covet, madam," said the lover, with enthusiasm—"bright youth—rich beauty—a fond, confiding, artless nature—truth in her eyes and love upon her lips—intellect on her lovely brow—oh, I can fancy that the new-made Eve, when first she learned to blush, was like Robina!"

"I'm na to learn, sir," said Miss. Mc.Prudie, as if with a sigh for former credulity, "that

that is what you a' paint as the picture of her you love; but love is na' lasting in a' natures—I, sir, was compared to Eve hersel in my young days, by one who changed his tone when fortune frowned on me—and then infirm o' purpose, as most men are, changed bock again just to give me the pride and glory o' spurning him." And Miss Mc.Prudie's features assumed a hideous glow of gluttred vengeance.

"And he deserved it, madam," said the lover; "and if ever I cease to adore, to cherish, to doat upon Robina, may she spurn me."

"But," said the lady, "I spak o' settlements—to my mind they're mair convincing than words. Of course I canna say what may be Sir Grigor and Lady Mc.Grigor's plans for their child; but supposing they have na objection to her choice—(*her* choice! how Luxmore's heart bounded) what can ye settle?"

"Not a tenth part what I could wish," said the lover, "and yet perhaps as much as they would expect. My estates are entailed, as you

perhaps know, but all I have besides I will gladly, proudly secure to Robina, of course more I cannot do—poor return as I feel it is for the love of one so young, so lovely, so unlike myself.”

“Why, as for that,” said Miss Mc.Prudie, “beauty is of na importance in a mon, though we women would fare ill enoo if we were na’ fair to look upon; but I must say, naething can be more straightforward and hondsomer than your answer to a query which I, sir, consider the touchstone of a mon’s affection. As Miss Mc.Grigor’s temporary guardian, I, on this understanding, admit you to address her by my sanction, till such time as you can receive her parents’ consent.”

“I will write to them to-night, dear Miss Mc.Prudie,” said the lover.

“And I will bock your letter by an epistle of my ain to-morrow,” said the spinster.

“Oh, how shall I thank you,” cried the lover. Will you honour me by accepting my

box at the opera to-morrow night for yourself and Miss Mc. Grigor, and by allowing me to escort you?"

"I see na great objection, sir; and to show my gude-will to your suit, you may e'en, if you like it, take a little quiet dinner with Robina and me before the opera."

"A thousand thanks—a thousand blessings on the kind heart that prompts such an offer," said the lover. "Ah, there is Robina herself on the lawn with Miss Stuart—I must hasten, and, madam, believe me eternally your debtor. If I ever can serve you, command me, I pray!"

He hurried out of the room.

"Eternally my debtor, poor crippled dupe! —dupe more of your own passions than even of Robina's wit," muttered Miss Mc.Prudie to herself, her maiden pride offended at this hasty retreat. "'Eternally obliged' indeed, 'and ready to serve me'—yes, just as long as this love-fit lasts, and then ye'd na' wag your little finger to pleasure me, or your present

gandy, frippery idol either—that is, if you're like the lave of your fause, selfish, hard-hearted, abominable sex. But by a' that's forward in woman and encroaching in mon," she added, looking from the window, "if the fellow has na' parted Robina from the company, and there they go arm-in-arm up the avenue together—and I do believe they're hastening along the shrubbery into the summer house; but that'll never do, Mr. Luxmore—I'll e'en mak one of your party unexpected, and it may be unwelcome, but for a' that, vary needful to keep you in your present devoted and abject state of mind, Mr. Luxmore! Between a' parties, it is ower true that familiarity breeds contempt, but between nane so much as lovers. Love, the delicate, devoted love woman should glory to inspire, as the old saying has it, "begins with the first sigh, and ends with the first kiss;" and she's a simple yielding fool who grants that first kiss, till the ring's on her finger, and a gude settlement secured to her, come what will. Na,

na, Mr. Luxmore, I'll see ye dinna get on too fast—not that I fear onything fra' Robina's tenderness, but mair women yield these degrading favours fra' weakness than love."

So saying, Miss Mc.Prudie hastened after her young charge, and to Mr. Luxmore's dismay entered an arbour just as he had seated Robina by his side, and pressed her hand in silent rapture to his heart.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BALL.

Miss Mc.Prudie was too proud of her pupil's conquest to keep it to herself; it was soon whispered about, and Robina found herself, as the future Mrs. Luxmore, the object of a respectful homage, at once new and delightful to her. Captain Fitzgeorge threw into his fine eyes, and engaging manner, a mournful and half-reproachful devotion, which filled Robina's heart with vague fascination, and kindled in Luxmore's a jealousy and self-disparaging

watchfulness, which is one of the most painful drawbacks of even happy love.

Miss Mc.Prudie hovered ever near her charge, to prompt, protect, and advise. A minuet was about to be danced. It was a dance in which Robina particularly excelled; Miss Mc.Prudie was anxious she should exhibit her talent and her charms. She turned to Mr. Luxmore and said, "Are ye na for leading Miss Mc.Grigor thro' a minuet, sir? She never looks to such advantage as in dancing one. Be quick, for here comes the Captain to ask her hand."

"Robina!" murmured Luxmore, pale with passion—"this is no dance for me—it is for the Graceful and the Beautiful, dearest—do as you like about dancing it with Fitzgeorge—I cannot bear to rob you of a pleasure, even if that pleasure" (at this moment Fitzgeorge implored her hand) "be agony to me!" he murmured, almost to himself. Robina did not seem to hear, nor did she heed the tears which swam in his

eyes. The beauty and fascination of the Captain, and her own vain desire to shine prevailed, and she suffered Fitzgeorge to lead her out.

The well-contrasted charms of Robina and her partner drew a ring of gazers around them. The young coquette exerted her utmost to please and to shine, and Luxmore watched with a despondent anguish, which, when mixed with a new and ardent love, is one of the most miserable states our wretched hearts are capable of. "They are well matched," he murmured to himself; "he alone is worthy of her; he must admire, nay, adore her; why should I so covet one I can never hope to make happy? how can she love me after gazing on him? and yet, if I resigned her—what then? if I gave her to him, do I believe he would be to her what God knows I will be? Is it a rival's petty and disparaging judgment? or do I really believe he has a shallow head, a narrow heart, and a vanity which would blind him even to Robina's

beauty, while his own engrosses his very soul. I do, I do feel that her chances of happiness are ten-fold with me, poor mean-looking, distorted cripple; but to judge this question fairly, I must not gaze on her." He abruptly left the room, and by the light of the cold moon, and distant stars, one might have seen his misshapen form, as with a limping and dejected gait he stole into the darkest parts of the shrubberies to commune with himself.

The minuet over, amid a half-suppressed buzz of applause, and many a gaze of flattering admiration, Fitzgeorge led Robina, panting and excited, to her seat beside Miss Mc.Prudie; and while he hastened to procure her some lemonade, the latter, alarmed at Mr. Luxmore's departure, and anxious to vent so uncomfortable a feeling, said spitefully to Robina:

"Ye'd better mind what you're aboot, Miss Mc.Grigor; a' that figuring and smiling and curtsyeing to Captain Fitzgeorge is na' much to Mr. Luxmore's taste I can tell you; he's gone

out quite disgusted with you, and I'll be na' surprised if he jilts you, makes a laughing-stock of me, and confers his eight thousand a year on some one with mair sense than to be flirting with a fellow that has naething, when she's just engaged herself to a mon of substance."

Robina was alarmed. To be jilted, laughed at, outwitted !

"Where is Mr. Luxmore?" she asked.

"He's e'en in the garden, I doot na' cursing you and a' womankind ; but sit you here till I come back. I see the dowagers are hurrying in to supper, and I'm not going to come in for the remnants, with Misses who live upon love."

She was gone. A French window near Robina opened on to the lawn ; she snatched up a shawl Miss Mc.Prudie had left beside her, and unobserved stole out into the moonlight. She hurried across the grass, and intent only on recovering her valuable conquest, she entered the shrubbery.

"Mr. Luxmore! dear Mr. Luxmore!" she cried, in a voice of timid tenderness; for some time she passed along unheeded, but presently that voice met the ear of one who had thrown himself on the earth in a fit of passionate despair and self-humiliation. He had crept into the darkest shade to shed some of the bitterest tears that ever welled from a wounded heart. He started up! how wild the revulsion of his feelings, how almost maddening his joy! Was it Robina? *his* Robina! alone! at night in this dark shrubbery! Did she then love him so well! love him with the love that conquers fear and shame, and snaps a thousand invisible but binding meshes, that restrain the timid, even if the fondest of her sex.

"Oh, Robina!" he cried, "angel! why are you here?"

"To look for you," she answered with assumed simplicity—"to know why you left the ball-room. I was so glad when the odious minuet was over, that I might get back to you!"

she added, half tearfully. "I only danced it because Miss Mc.Prudie said you would like to see it, and you, unkind and indifferent, wouldn't even take the trouble to look on; what have you to say for yourself? Come, speak."

"No, no, speak on, speak, ever adored, idolized Robina!" cried the enraptured lover; "tell me all the feelings of that candid, pure heart, but ask not to hear the bitter and dark secrets of mine. And did you hasten back to me, and did you long to find me and venture out alone to make a wretched outcast the most blest of men? Oh, Robina!" (and he caught her to his breast and pressed his burning lips to her cheek) "in the presence of these eternal heavens I vow to love thee as woman was never loved before."

"Well, then, you'll come back directly, will you?" said Robina coaxingly, "I must be in the ball-room before Miss Mc.Prudie comes from supper, or I know not what she'll say or

do—there, let me go, there's a dear kind Mr. Luxmore !”

And she darted away.

Was it a marvel that he believed that he was loved—loved with the first innocent love of a pure heart ?—was it a marvel that he returned to her side, wild with hope and joy ?

CHAPTER XII.

THE BRIDE-ELECT.

How important a person did Robina become at Bruce House—how envied was she by all her young companions—how coaxed, petted, and flattered by the teachers, who hoped, (if they could but erase the record of former slights and spites) through the interest of the fashionable and beautiful Mrs. Luxmore, to rise from teachers at 'Bruce House' to governesses in great families; perhaps indeed she might select one among them as companion to herself,

and each thought she should certainly be that one.

Robina felt some little disinclination to introduce Mr. Luxmore to either teachers or pupils. Not hers the luxury of a loving girl's delight in introducing one who seems to her, perfection, and whom she believes all will see with her eyes; but then she knew well what were the objects of *real* envy and admiration in this little circle, and though she *did* wish that in addition to all else, *he* had been, a younger and a fairer man, she was sure that such as he was, he would be thought more of, than any poor and unimportant lover, whatever his beauty and his merit. She knew too he must be seen, sooner or later, by those who were adroit at peeping over blinds, and making excuses for darting up-stairs just as he was coming down, or coming down just as he was going up—and so, as she heartily wished his introduction over, she effected it by a *coup de maître*, in a manner sure to show him to advantage in their eyes, and herself in his.

The lover was come as usual in his elegant chariot, with tickets for some theatre, to which he was to take Robina and Miss Mc.Prudie. Robina, drest betimes, was in the little drawing-room awaiting him. Miss Mc.Prudie was having a newly turned silk dress (just brought home) fitted on—a difficult, and to the poor sempstress, a dreadful task!

The teachers and the pupils were still at tea; Robina had recently left them there. Mr. Luxmore came in; he carried in his hand an elegant basket full of the choicest French bon-bons, and his valet followed with a much larger one of the finest hot-house fruit. Robina received both him and his offerings with apparent delight, and then she said, “Will you do me a great favour, dearest?”

“Speak—what could I refuse you!”

“Well, then, come with me and let me introduce you to the young ladies, and to Miss Fitzosborne, Miss Twitch, and Mademoiselle La Vanille; and before Miss Mc.Prudie sees

these beautiful things, do present them to them—oh do! *they* have nothing to make them happy—and” (she added, seeing he hesitated) “I have so much!”

With an endearing and, to poor Luxmore, an irresistible fondness, Robina caught up the basket of fruit with one hand, compelled him to take the box of bon-bons, affectionately passed her arm through his, and tossing back her long curls, looked with arch tenderness into his face.

He suffered himself to be guided as she would; she led him down stairs, knocked gently at the school-room door, and that well-known knock exciting no alarm, she the next moment, amid the ill-suppressed “Dear mes”—“Oh goodness!”—and “Mon Dieu” of the teachers, and the giggles of the girls, introduced Mr. Luxmore. Mr. Luxmore bowed low (it was the fashion of his day), and all the ladies rose and curtsied; Miss Fitzosborne tried to settle her turban-cap unseen; Miss Twitch, who wore a Brutus crop, shook her curls in hopes of

shaking them into order ; and Miss La Vanille, with the open coquetry of a French-woman, walked to the little dingy chimney glass, arranged her hair and her *collerette*, and returned much improved and quite unabashed, to make herself as agreeable as possible. Mr. Luxmore's easy manners (the result of much intercourse with the best society) soon set the party at ease, even one person, who to all the disadvantages of dishabille and surprise, added that of being partly by stealth and partly by courtesy at the school tea-table. This was no less a person than Mr. Sawnie Gillespie—once accepted suitor, then heartless renouncer of Miss Mc.Prudie, and now again a sneaking suppliant for her favour—a cupboard lover of all the ladies of Bruce House, and writing and arithmetic master to the establishment. It happened that on this particular day his lesson was given in the evening, and aware of the appointed hour of tea, he had dropt in a quarter of an hour before his time, in the hope of getting some little refreshment at

the expense of one who, while so sternly rejecting his renewed proposals, so meanly retained the twenty guinea brooch offered by him as her Intended, and accepted by her as his Affianced. This brooch stuck for ever in his memory. Sawnie Gillespie had two grand objects in life, the one the recovery of this valuable token, the other that of Maggie Mc.Prudie herself; the latter, as he was a stern, a resolute, and cunning man, would probably include the former; for he had inwardly vowed, even if he by perseverance or stratagem succeeded in making himself master of Miss Mc.Prudie, he would regain possession of the token he had so bitterly regretted and so long coveted—for the pleasure of converting it once more into current coin of the realm. No one who did not thoroughly know the man, could understand the many feelings and motives connected with this long cherished desire; revenge, cupidity, spite, and Scotch perseverance, all had their share, together with a sort of wish to prove to himself that he

had not been fooled and outwitted like a sentimental school-boy, and that the woman whose thousand petty and vindictive tyrannies during his reverses had made him hate her, had never been even so much as the value of that brooch the gainer by him.

Mr. Sawnie Gillespie was tall, high-shouldered, raw-boned, and large-limbed; time had not merely thinned but positively carried off his once bushy hair of dingy red. Personal vanity (of which he had a large share) prevented his choosing to appear confessedly and hopelessly bald—and parsimony prevented his paying a good sum for a good and ample wig. He yielded a little to both passions, (for with him they were nothing less) and cheapened an auburn *toupé*, which, covering only the crown of his head, gave, as he thought, an additional and advantageous height to his knobby forehead, and made his face, ears, and throat, appear startlingly large in proportion to the small scalp of curls indicated as his head. A pair of sharp

grey eyes twinkled through a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles, and an immense mouth was garnished with teeth, which for length and size seemed a set of boar's tusks.

Mr. Gillespie, however, had his charms, and his admirers. He was fond of being petted by women, and was a great admirer of beauty. He had a cunning way of paying an occasional compliment, betraying a feeling of admiration, and evincing a propensity to gallantry (few and far between indeed), but which coming from a creature so uncouth, and from whom so little in that way was to be expected, made the lady he so distinguished, believe her charms must be potent indeed, since they could affect even Mr. Gillespie.

There is a natural propensity in all women to lavish a great deal of kindness on some ingrate or other of the name of man. Young and old love to cherish, pet, and fondle some favoured one. Where tastes can be indulged, and choice is not limited, many are fastidious in the selection

of their idols, their pets, and their doating-pieces; but where, among a sisterhood of women of all ages, one man alone is admitted, that man, however old, ugly, or unamiable, will probably become the object of all the overflowings of the ordinary run of female hearts, and will be coaxed, wheedled, and fondled by those who would scorn, flout, and ridicule their awkward pet if they were free to choose for themselves.

The purple, double-chinned, corpulent monk is at once the idol and the pet of many a solitary nun. Secluded with him in the country, the once unwilling bride doats on the most ungainly and selfish and unloveable of husbands. The invalid old maid makes a pet of the pursy, snuff-taking doctor; and in fashionable schools, almost every master, however ill-looking and ill-bred, is often, unconsciously to himself, the object of a vague yet fond interest to the high-born hoydens and the sedate teachers.

Where these *Professors* are well drest, good looking, and given to a sly and insinuating system of flirtation, the result is of course more certain, and the impression more dangerous. And whole generations of girls dream away the invaluable and irrecoverable years of first and plastic youth (years when, if fancy-free, they learn as if by magic) in a vague, engrossing, and unrevealed passion for an agile, scented, and white-gloved '*Monsieur le maitre de danse*'—a dark-eyed moustachiod Italian singing-master—or the pale, subdued young artist, who teaches drawing, and touches up all they do, till they seem geniuses even to themselves.

Now as these absurd, romantic, and yet all-engrossing prepossessions certainly prevent the progress of the mind and the mastering a talent, it were surely wiser and better in the secluded and convent-like establishments for 'Young Ladies,' to employ chiefly female professors, now so well, so admirably fitted for the task; and

were this generally done, one more road to female independence would be open to female talent; while, even if some little brilliancy were sacrificed, (which, however, we do not admit, but maintain the very reverse) or some little ultra finish dispensed with—to all men of sense, taste, and feeling, a girl would be fairer without that ultra finish and ultra brilliancy, than without the first bloom of feeling, the first freshness of her affections, the first glassing of the star of passion in the mirror of her heart—all which have been thrown away in her early teens on one, who, every way unworthy of her imaginative devotion, and however much to the eye of Experience a Coxcomb and Vulgarian, will yet, if thrown in her way when the young heart is eager to make to itself an idol, be loved with a wild and romantic fervour no real merit will ever be able to awaken again in that heart. “*On n’aime bien qu’une fois—c’est la première.*” If this be true, and if it be true also, that the young heart is ever

eager to love, how careful should its guardians be, to throw into its intimacy none on whom its first love will certainly be lavished, and as certainly thrown away.

However, Mr. Sawnie Gillespie, though coaxed and petted, was (we must own) not a person to awaken the romantic passion we allude to; but *even he* was, as we see, made a vast deal of at Bruce House, where Miss Mc Prudie wisely admitted no other masters. First-rate lady professors alone were employed there, and perhaps Gillespie would not have been engaged at all, but that on one side she could not bear to forego the petty pride of tyrannizing over him, nor on the other, find it in the woman corner of her heart to prevent, as she said, his "turning a penny" without "turning it out of her pocket."

Mr. Luxmore bowed kindly in answer to the formal and school-boy-like reverence made him by Gillespie. He was in a mood to see everything *coulour de rose*—even the old writing

master—for had he not taught Robina? Instead of looking upon him then as a sordid, awkward fellow, he persuaded himself he was a shy, an amiable, but unappreciated genius—a sort of Dominie Sampson, in person and mind. His own intense and triumphant happiness, far from making him unfeeling to others, showed itself in a boundless and benignant philanthropy; and when Robina, whose instinctive coquetry taught her the value of contrast, playfully placed her hand on Gillespie's high shoulder, and bent forward so that her soft blooming face was beside his, and that her rich hair fell on his pepper and salt coat, while she said: "You must love our dear Mr. Gillespie, for if ever I write you a billet-doux, it will be owing to him, will it not?"—he felt as if he could scarcely forbear hugging not only Robina, but the old writing and arithmetic master himself!

Mr. Luxmore, however, only said: "He to whom I owe so great a pleasure, must rank me at once among his friends, and if ever I can

serve one who has so served me, he will only have to furnish me with the opportunity."

Gillespie bowed low, and said he would, when such occurred, take the liberty of reminding Mr. Luxmore of his promised patronage and support. "In the meantime, sir," he added, "I much wish to extend my connexion among the Nobility, the Gentry, the Clergy, and the Rising Generation. I undertake, sir, to correct the vilest system of caligraphy in one dozen lessons, and to impart to the least accomplished penman, for the sum of two guineas, my originally self-invented, admirable, new style of running-hand writing. With regard to accounts, sir, I hope you will find Miss (since I have the honour of being allowed to congratulate you on your choice, sir,) not only an adept in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, but"—and he grinned at his own pun—"perfect in *practice*."

Mr. Luxmore could not help shrinking a little from the ill-bred forwardness his own

encouraging urbanity had prompted ; but Robina was smiling at the garrulous self-eulogies of the old professor, and when Robina smiled Mr. Luxmore could not frown.

"Pray, Miss Twitch," asked Gillespie, "what is become of my last specimen of penmanship? I should like to submit it to Mr. Luxmore."

"It is on the mantel-piece in the front drawing-room, Mr. Gillespie," said Miss Twitch. I put it there myself, that Miss Mc. Prudie's morning visitors might see and appreciate it."

"I wish then some one would fetch it down."

Miss Twitch dreaded an encounter with Miss Mc.Prudie, so did Miss Fitzosborne—and Miss La Vanille said with a shrug, "*Excusez moi, on n'aime pas trop, me voir la haut.*"

Robina feared she might be detained till Miss Mc.Prudie was ready.

"I am not much afraid to go," said a very gentle voice, from a small side table. Mr. Luxmore turned his eyes in the direction

whence it came, and saw a pale, slender girl, with large black eyes, soft fair hair, simply braided, a plain gingham dress, and the subdued air common to the Oppressed.

Spite of her melancholy air and wan complexion, the soft beauty of her expression and of her delicate features struck Mr. Luxmore; her little table was placed partly behind a door, so that he had not seen her in the first instance, and during the distribution of the fruit and *ben-jons* she had remained unnoticed.

It was Eva Morris, one of those unhappy beings to be found in all girls' schools, who, though equal in all other respects to her young companions, had not, like them, parents well to do, and therefore was required to contribute her services as a needle-woman and under-teacher, for her poor board and little flock bed, and a few scanty opportunities of improving herself.

The care of the pupils' wardrobe generally devolves on the sensitive and unhappy girl thus

singled out by Mammon for the oppression of a whole establishment, and she is known generally by the absurd name of the Clothes' Teacher. Mr. Luxmore's quick eye detected that her untasted tea was many shades paler in hue than that of the young ladies at the principal table, her bread thicker and butter thinner, and her dress much meaner and less modish.

He read her story in all these little indications, and as her colour rose at the sound of her own voice, and the sight of his eyes fixed upon her, poor Eva, all unawares to herself, has made a friend !

To her meek offer of going to fetch the grand drawing-room specimen of penmanship, Miss Twitch and Miss Fitzosborne answered in one voice, " Yes, do, Eva, there's a good girl, and if *you are* caught, you've no favour to lose."

" And mind how you bring it, Eva," said Gillespie, " for it's worth more money than you ever saw."

" *Mon Dieu,*" said Mademoiselle La Vanille as

Eva, pale but resolute, left the room—"pourquoi l'envoyer, la pauvre petite, si Madame l'aperçoit, ce sera encore des injures, peut-être même un soufflet!"

Miss Fitzosborne and Miss Twitch laughed, as they vulgarly agreed she would "catch it" certainly if Miss Mc.Prudie saw her. All the pupils tittered in chorus, and Mr. Gillespie said he only hoped nothing would happen to the "beautiful and invaluable specimen."

"Ah, sir," he said, being elated with his hopes of patronage, and as all vulgar people are, very forward and disagreeable when elated—"to see all these gentle creatures, now looking as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, you'd not believe the trouble I have had to enable them to turn out a decent letter. However, as I say in finishing them off—never forget to cross your Ts and dot your Is, up gently, down firmly—*never let there be a blot upon your page*, and above all, *mind your Ps and Qs.*" He rubbed

his hands and laughed at his own jokes, and all the ladies joined in a little applause.

At this moment Eva returned, carrying with her an immensely large, glazed and framed specimen of Mr. Gillespie's penmanship. Every kind of writing, from the largest text to the smallest Italian, was neatly displayed, surrounded by female figures, flourishing trumpets, festoons of flowers, birds and fishes, the whole surmounted by the figures of Victoria and Albert, and ending by a dedication, of a servile nature, of the whole grand specimen to Miss Mc.Prudie and the other ladies of Bruce House, by Sawnie Gillespie, professor of calligraphy.

A chorus of praise greeted the ears of poor Eva, as she placed the gigantic treasure in Mr. Gillespie's eagerly extended hands. The unwonted words of good-will and applause filled her eyes with tears. The quick Robina marked the deep interest with which her lover gazed on poor Eva, and eager, by her own graceful ami-

ability, to divert his attention, she threw one of her fair arms round the poor girl's waist, and said: "Dear Eva is always so ready to oblige—come, you have not yet had your share of the fruit and *bon-bons*."

"My share!" said Eva, with tell-tale surprise; but she hastily turned to the basket Robina held, for she felt the tears would force themselves down her cheeks. Harshness and injustice seldom made them flow, but a word of unwonted kindness unlocked the fountain of those tears. Mr. Gillespie proceeded pompously to display the merits of his production, and Mr. Luxmore for about ten minutes compelled himself to appear at least to attend; but when he saw that there was no prospect of a termination to this tax on his politeness, he rose and approached the table where Robina was vainly trying to make Eva Morris accept some of the fruit and *bon-bons*.

"Have you noticed this eagle, sir, composed of one flourish, one only, I assure you, sir?"

said the Bore, following Mr. Luxmore with the frame.

"I have, I have, sir," said Mr. Luxmore hastily—"Robina, your friend must oblige me by accepting this bunch of grapes."

Eva blushed and took it.

"Bunch of grapes, sir!" said Gillespie; "let me direct your attention to these, all with the vines and tendrils dashed off with one stroke of the pen—"look, sir, I beg."

"I am engaged at present," said Mr. Luxmore, rather provoked out of his usual self-possession; he was selecting some of the gayest *bon-bons* for Robina's friend.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mr. Gillespie, with a loud sigh; and turning to Miss Twitch he said, "Put it away, mem! It took me many a midnight hour, and it isn't worth looking at after all it seems."

"You have hurt his feelings," whispered Robina reproachfully to her lover. (She thought it graceful to show sympathy.) Mr.

Luxmore thought so too, and Gillespie's words awoke compunction in his kind heart.

"Mr. Gillespie," he said, "you mistake me—I consider your specimen a masterpiece—I wish to possess just such another ; for what will you set about one for me? And when completed, I must have the pleasure of seeing you again!"

"Perhaps," said the greedy usher, cupidity glittering in his eyes—"if you are in a hurry for it, the ladies would give up this specimen ; I could do them one at my leisure."

"Nay, we must never be so ungallant as to make the ladies wait," said Mr. Luxmore, concealing his disgust, "and the sooner we learn to do so ourselves the better." And then, considering that perhaps the poor writing master was in real want, he slipped furtively a five-pound note into his hand and whispered, "All artists require an earnest—let me have the specimen at your convenience—we will settle about it then."

"Angel!" murmured Eva, who had noticed the action; but at this moment the door was flung open, and, livid with suppressed rage, bright with a refulgent squint, and decked for conquest, in came Miss Mc.Prudie.

"So," she said, "so, ladies—so, Mr. Gillespie! I didn't know I had a rout this evening. Mr. Luxmore, your servant, sir! A regular tea party, I declare—who sent out the cards, Miss Fitzosborne?"

"It is only the school tea, ma'am," faltered Miss Fitzosborne—"only the young ladies."

"And is Mr. Gillespie one of the young ladies?"

"He came a little before his time, mem, and we couldn't do less than offer him a cup of tea, mem," said Miss Twitch.

"Mon Dieu! non c'eut été très impoli le pauvre homme," murmured Miss La Vanille.

"I'm sure I didn't wish to take it," said the cowardly and treacherous Gillespie, "but"—and he grinned as he fixed his eyes on Miss

McPrudie's neatly pinned lace kerchief—"when ladies insist, a man can't say no."

Miss McPrudie glanced modestly and with dignity at the *fichu* which veiled her charms, and more closely drew her bosom's screen, while a glance of half gentle resentment reproved her former lover. What if she had known that his bold glance was sent solely in search of the long-coveted, unforgotten, brooch!

"The tea, Miss Fitzosborne," she said with dignity, "and the bread and butter, Miss Twitch, Mr. Gillespie well knows I could not grudge to any fellow-creature; but the presence of any gentleman at my pupils' tea table is not merely an infringement of the abstract laws of propriety, but a violation of the direct and recorded rules of this establishment."

"I am sure I have said enough—this will not, cannot be repeated—excuse me, Mr. Luxmore, but mine is a situation of peculiar delicacy and responsibility—and even you must not

venture, except under my guidance, into this sacred temple."

Mr. Luxmore bowed.

"Ha!" she cried, "what is this! how came this down stairs? who dared remove this from my drawing-room?"

"Not I, mem," said Miss Fitzosborne.

"Nor I," said Miss Twitch.

"Ni moi!" said Mademoiselle La Vanille.

"I did, madam," said Eva, softly yet firmly, while the colour rose to her temples.

"You did!" said the astounded Miss Mc. Prudie; "upon my word, Miss Morris, it is lucky that the arrangement between us draws to a close; you of all my household the least entitled to take liberties, you really act quite like the mistress of Bruce House."

"I didn't even know it was removed upstairs," said Gillespie.

"Pray what induced you to presume to move it, Miss Morris?"

"I did it," said Eva, "to show it to Mr. Luxmore."

"Then, madam, I request that for so unwarrantable an intrusion into my drawing-room you make me an humble apology before all present, and beg pardon of all the ladies for your bold defiance of feminine propriety."

"Nay, nay, madam," said Mr. Luxmore, "let me intercede—the young lady did this at my request—the error, the sole error, has been mine, namely, that of persuading myself that I was sufficiently intimate here to ask such a favour of one of your household."

"Nay, that alters the matter," said Miss Mc. Prudie; "I should be sorry that Miss Morris, or any dependent of mine, should refuse to comply with a request of yours, Mr. Luxmore. But, come, the tea awaits us—we shall lose the overture." And again she frowned, as she met Gillespie's eye fixed on her *fichu*, but a smile and a blush mingled with the frown as she prudishly readjusted it.

"There, don't cry, Miss Morris, I retract my censure of your conduct—come, Mr. Luxmore—come, my Robina!"

"I have yet one favour to ask," said Mr. Luxmore, "dear Miss Mc.Prudie. Let Miss Morris be of our party to the play; in this way I shall atone a little for the unintentional pain I have caused her—do, dear Miss Mc.Prudie!"

"Well, since you wish it, that is, if she can get ready while we take tea; nor am I sorry to have a fourth of the party, for you lovers are sad company except for each other. Miss Morris get ready directly."

"I shall feel so honoured," said Mr. Luxmore, with gentle deference to the poor clothes teacher; and following Miss Mc.Prudie, he led Robina up-stairs.

Poor Eva, how wildly beat her heart! What kindness, what joy!

"We'll come and help you dress, Eva!" said several of her companions.

"Eva going out for the evening—that is something new," said one.

"You may wear my lano frock," said another —"we are just of a size!"

"And my pearl comb, Eva!"

"And my gold chain——"

"Je viendrai te coiffer, ma pauvre enfant," said the good-natured Mademoiselle La Vanille.

But jealous and angry Miss Fitzosborne and Miss Twitch called all to order.

Mr. Gillespie growlingly summoned the young ladies to their writing lesson, while the teachers returned to their half-finished tea.

Eva repaired to her toilet with no attendant but Mademoiselle La Vanille, nor could she have had a better. The Frenchwoman rummaged out her tasteful stores, to deck the panting and enraptured girl; and though Eva's white muslin dancing frock was her dress for the occasion, yet so tastefully was her hair arranged, and so judiciously were a few French ornaments disposed about her person, that

Mademoiselle was quite in raptures—Eva wild with joy—Robina pale with envy—Mr. Luxmore's attentions divided—Miss Mc.Prudie proud of her poor dependant, as an offshot of Bruce House—and Eva the belle of the evening, and the admired of all beholders. Happier for her had she retired with the other pupils to her little flock bed at eight o'clock. "The price of earthly bliss is earthly woe." To the step-child of Fate there is such dangerous witchery in kindness. Poor Eva! as she met Mr. Luxmore's gentle gaze, she felt she should have known him sooner or not at all. Poor Eva! she had one blessing till this evening—she was fancy free. Alas! what was she now?

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DREAM AND THE REVEILLE.

Some weeks past happily and swiftly by ; gratified vanity winged each rosy hour of Robina's life, and a wild and imaginative passion, which he fondly believed reciprocal, made this season of ardent courtship a dream of ecstasy to poor Luxmore.

Every pleasure he could devise, every elegant offering he could make, every watchful attention he could pay, proved the deep devotion of the lover, and to Robina's vain mind were not greater evidence of his love than of her loveli-

ness. Presents of every kind, rich silks, costly laces, handsome trinkets, choice wines, game, fruit, flowers, were lavished on Miss Mc.Prudie, and kept that lady in a state of supreme benignity ; while the amiable lover never forgot a delicate attention or a kind remembrance for poor Eva, and indeed all the happier and wealthier companions of his heart's idol. Mr. Gillespie's elaborate specimen of caligraphy had' been completed, and its author nobly remunerated, and all the inhabitants of Bruce House were looking forward with rapture to a pic-nic and a ball to be given by Mr. Luxmore, when an unforeseen disaster changed the house of joy into one of mourning, and the happiest of lovers into the most miserable of men.

For some time it had excited the surprise of Miss Mc.Prudie, Robina, and Mr. Luxmore, that no answer had been sent by Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor, and Lady Mc.Grigor of Grigor, to the flattering and most advantageous proposal made to them for their daughter's hand.

However the match was in every way so desirable, and so far above aught they could have expected for their child, that no fears of any kind were mingled with the surmises of all as to the cause of this silence. Absence from home, illness, even the excitement of great delight, or above all, the probability of a joyful acceptance in person, were in turn proposed in explanation, and the whole affair went on exactly as if Robina's choice had been sanctioned and applauded by her parents.

One night Robina returned with Miss Mc. Prudie and her lover from a ball where she had been more than ever lovely and admired, and Mr. Luxmore more than ever in love. It was with great difficulty that Miss Mc. Prudie had forced the reluctant lover to return in his chariot, and allow herself and Robina to seek the rest they so needed. At length, having invited himself to breakfast, he forced himself away, and Robina and Miss Mc. Prudie repaired to the drawing-room in search of their chamber

candles. A maid servant, more than half asleep, muttered something as they entered the room; but a shriek from Robina, who had tripped in before Miss Mc.Prudie, first informed that lady that something unusual had occurred. Seated before the empty grate, in a travelling cloak of Mc.Grigor tartan, with folded arms, and when he turned, with an expression of sternness and wrath, was a large heavy looking man.

Miss Mc.Prudie exclaimed, "Sir Grigor Mc. Grigor!"

And Robina felt a chill at her heart, while she murmured, "My father!"

"Your servant! Miss Mc.Prudie," said Sir Grigor, with a mixture of ceremonious courtesy and repelling hauteur, as he made her one of the formal bows of the old school—"come hither, my daughter, is that the London fashion of welcoming a parent?"

"Oh, papa! I was so delighted to see you,"

exclaimed the sly damsel, rushing up to him ;
"surprise and joy made me silent."

And she held up to his lips a face of such blooming beauty, lighted by such appealing eyes, that even the stern Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor felt a father's pride and fondness at his heart as he parted her chesnut hair on her fine forehead, kissed it, and finally hugged her in his arms.

"And how is dear mamma, and where is she ?
And how is Beckie and Bob ?—and my pony,
and ——"

"Her Leddyship is in her usual health," said Sir Grigor, recovering his composure ;
"her attendant, Beckie, is as usual ; your pets you will soon have an opportunity of inquiring after in person."

Robina looked startled ; her father then was come to fetch her. She glanced anxiously at Miss Mc.Prudie, who, dying with curiosity, began :—

"I presume, Sir Grigor, that you and Leddy

Mc.Grigor have received my letter, containing the proposals of Mr. Luxmore, and my own remarks on that gentleman's position and prospects, with my warm recommendation of him to your favour as a suitor for your daughter!"

"Those letters, madam, I have received."

"Mr. Luxmore, myself, and I may add, my sweet charge, your daughter, have been anxiously expecting your answer, sir."

"You would nane o' ye hae had lang to wait," said Sir Grigor, his eyes flashing fire from under his shaggy grey eyebrows, "had I na' been wi' her Ledyship fra' hame when the letters reached Glenlonely, madam. We hae been twa months obsent, and as I did na' expect ony letters of importance, I did na' desire ony to be forwarded. As it is, I hae trovelled night and day to answer your favour and Mr. Luxmore's in person."

"Dear, kind papa," said Robina, twining her arms round his neck.

"Just what my ain dear father would hae

done," said Miss Mc.Prudie. "How sorry I am the lateness of the hour makes it impossible you should see Mr. Luxmore till to-morrow."

"I hae na intention o' seeing him, modom; a letter or a message will do just as well."

Miss Mc.Prudie looked puzzled.

"I am sure you will like him; he is everything the best of fathers could desire for the best of children, and I own I feel a little proud that my darling Robina has formed this brilliant connexion under my auspices."

"The connexion is na' formed, modom," growled Sir Grigor, and added, thumping his clenched fist on a little frail work-table, which sunk under the blow—"it never will be. I hae other and higher views for Miss Mc. Grigor!"

"Higher, Sir Grigor—a man of family and fortune; eight thousand a year, a place in Berkshire, a mansion in St. James's—a——"

"A mere mushroom of the south, modom ;

but it matters not what he is, nor what are his merits, since I at once and for ever decline his alliance, and forbid his attentions."

"But, sir, his cherished hopes, his devoted attachment—your daughter's affections."

"I wunna believe," said Sir Grigor sternly, "that a leddy o' Miss Mc.Prudie's discretion and experience has suffered ony mon to cherish hopes of my daughter's hond, unsanctioned by me or her Leddyship, nor can I imagine she has given him ony opportunity of evincing his devotion or of winning Miss Mc.Grigor's affections. I would na' so far degrade you, modom, as to consider you so despicable a choracter as a match-maker; nor believe my ain child, the last o' the Mc.Grignors, forward eno' to bestow her affections except by her parents' desire."

"Oh, papa!" sobbed Robina, "if you could but see Mr. Luxmore!"

"That is na' necessary and indeed it is na' possible; I have ordered the corrigie and

porters to be here at four the morn, and you keep such late hours at Bruce House, Miss Mc. Prudie, that it wants but three hours of that time."

"But, papa, I cannot go without seeing him again," faltered Robina, in the accent of a sentimental heroine in distress.

"Seeing whom?" shouted Sir Grigor, in a voice that made Miss Mc. Prudie shake, the glass ornaments on the mantel-piece ring, and Robina turn pale.

"Mr. Luxmore, papa," at length stammered Robina, seeing that Miss Mc. Prudie, livid with terror at the furious aspect of Sir Grigor Mc. Grigor, dared not utter a word.

"Ance for a' then!" cried the old laird, purple with passion, stamping furiously, and clenching his fist—"ken that the mon is naething, can be naething to you; I have other and far higher views for you, and I forbid you, upon peril of a father's curse, ever to speak to,

correspond with, or think of, as a husband, a fellow wha if he continues his pursuit o' my dochter, does it in defiance o' a mon wha never was defied with impunity. For you, Miss Mc. Prudie, I must e'en say, though I hae kenned ye these forty years a woman grown, you're na' yet come to years o' discretion, modom; nay mair," he added, rising in rage and approaching Miss Mc. Prudie, who, green with terror, with her refulgent squint and low forehead, looked like a terrified adder—"nay mair, modom! yer na fule; ye ken to whose interest ye owe yer present connection, yer flourishing estoblishment, and a' these fine gimcracks aboot ye; ken too, that he wha could mak, can unmak; we Scotch send na' our lassies to the Sooth to be tricked by motchmakers into degrading alliances wi' Southron fortune-hunters."

"Degrading, sir!" faltered Miss Mc. Prudie
—"Mr. Luxmore is——"

"Rejected by me, modom, and in my doch-

ter's name; d'ye hear, there'll be bluidshed if he persevere in coorting Mc.Grigor's dochter against the will o' Mc.Grigor. And noo, na mair, na ane word mair; I forgive wha' has passed, as does her Leddyship, on condection we never hear the mon's name again. Gang yer was, Robina, and get a' yer claiths and trumpery pocked by four the morn; but first gie me yer word as a led dy, and a dochter o' the hoose o' Mc.Grigor, ye'll na' put pen to paper to the mon ye ca' Mr. Luxmore—if ye gie me na' yer word o' this, I trust ye na' out o' my sight, lassie. Yer mother and myself hae an epistle concocted, written out fair, and signed by our twa sels, to which ye'll just put yer name, when in the presence o' Miss Mc. Prudie I hae read its contents. Ye may as well hear and seegn it before ye leave the room."

So saying, he took from a most bulky old pocket-book, a large letter, and proceeded to read as follows.

Sir,

Lady Mc.Grigor and myself have received your favour of the 10th ultimo, forwarded to us by Miss Mc.Prudie. It would have been answered immediately, but that we were absent from home from the day of its arrival, till this present time that I take up my pen to do myself the honour of replying to it. Lady Mc.Grigor and myself beg at once and most decidedly to decline the honour of your alliance. Our daughter is too young as yet to judge for herself, and of course has referred you entirely to her parents; indeed it is the opinion of Lady Mc.Grigor and myself that no child is justified in choosing for herself in these matters, while it has pleased God to spare her those so much better able to decide for her. We both (Lady Mc.Grigor and myself) severely censure Miss Mc.Prudie for the part she has taken in this affair; but if she return to a sense of her duty to her pupil and allegiance to us, and interfere

no more in this matter, our censure will be her only punishment, as probably a mistaken notion of our wishes and views may have led her into error; but you will do well, sir, not to induce her to provoke the deeper wrath of those who made, and who can unmake, her. Our only child, of course, entirely coincides with her parents in a decision of such importance, and in token of her dismissal of your suit, signs her name below. Lady Mc.Grigor presents her compliments and affixes her name, with that of, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

GRIGOR MC.GRIGOR OF GRIGOR.

(Signed) BARBARA GRIGOR OF GRIGOR.

And after much reluctance, some sobs, and some threats, in a trembling hand (Mr. Gillespie would have blushed to own as his pupil's) might be traced faint and blotted the words,

(Signed) ROBINA MC.GRIGOR.

Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor then pompously sealed the letter with a coat of arms large as the privy

seal, and having again made Robina promise not to write one word to Mr. Luxmore, he handed the letter to Miss Mc.Prudie, and said, "Cheer up, modom, I ken how to forgive as weel as how to resent and to poonish. Be discreet, and ye'll be nane the waur o' yer imprudence in this affair; and noo, while Robina maks ready for her journey, we'll e'en set right the stateestical part o' this business. Hae ye your sma' account ready?"

"Will ye na' tak some sma' refreshment, Sir Grigor?" meekly asked Miss Mc.Prudie. "A cup o' tay can do na harm, Sir Grigor!"

"And na gude either, I'm thinking. Na, a glass o' wheesky and water, piping hot, I'll na' refuse; I leave tay for lassies and Southrons. Gang, Robina, mak a' ready, and busk ye for trovelling, bairn." And while Miss Mc.Prudie officiously hurried to get the whisky and water, the old laird, catching his daughter in his arms, said, "Never troost to an old maid to chuse ye a husband, lassie; wha' can she ken about the

motter? troost yer father, bairn, and yer mother, wha kenned sa weel how to chuse for hersel. This fellow, this Luxmore, what is he? A young flauntering ne'er do weel, I doot na', whase face is his fortune, and a dainty girlish shape his chief boast."

"Oh no, papa! Mr. Luxmore is very old (to Robina a man of forty seemed very old); he is not at all handsome, and as for a girlish shape, he's quite crooked and lame."

"Old, crooked, ugly, and lame! upon my word, lassie, a fine choice for Mc.Grigor's only dochter truly; I told ye na' to troost to an old maid to choose ye a mon—old, ugly, crooked, and lame!" And Sir Grigor burst into a succession of fits of uncontrollable laughter. When they had a little subsided, Robina poutingly said: "Oh, but, papa, he's so rich, and so generous, and so kind and so good, and he has such houses and lands, and horses and carriages, and a mint of money besides, and he so loves me."

“ And I’ll find ye a husband, lassie, young, hondsone, wi’ the finest figure in a’ Scotland, wi’ houses and lands, and horses and carriages—and who’ll loe ye wi’ all his heart—a mon a’ the lassies are mod after—o’ a family coeval wi’ our ain—and who’ll mak ye na Meestress like a huckster’s wife, but my leddy, as your mother and a’ yer foremithers were before ye. Gang yer ways, lassie—old, ugly, crooked, and lame—he! he! he! hi! hi! hi! ho! ho! ho! an old maid’s choice—gang yer ways, and mak ready, and thank yer father and yer stars—ho! ho! ho!”

Abashed and discomfited, Robina repaired to her little room; there Miss Mc.Prudie came to her for a moment, and said rather coldly: “I have called up Eva Morris to help you pack, Robina; my maids make a great fuss about being called or kept up at night, as well they may when they work hard all day. Eva, who leads a fine idle life of it, can at least bear one broken night. Oh, you had better leave me

Mr. Luxmore's presents. I will return them to him. A fine scene I have gone through! and all for your sake! I am sure if you ever do mak a gude motch, you should strive to mak me amends for a' I hae put up wi' this night. Thonkless work! thonkless work! I'll na' be in bed till morn—I ken when Sir Grigor gets the wheesky bottle, there's na end wi' his clavers, till he finds the bottom o' it. Remember the presents. How he's singing at this time o' night! there again! I've sent Eva to the larder for the cold beef and bread and peeckles, and to the cellar for the wheesky; and she's had to mak the water boil, and may be to light the fire, for the cook will not stir for me or onybody. Oh, there goes Eva with the tray; I must e'en gang and mix the wheesky, and then I'll send her to you; and as it is to be, the suner you're off the better, for I'm worn out wi' trouble and terror! Oh! what a mon's yer father! and what a thonkless office has mine been! It'll

teach me to try to mak anither's fortune. Greet
on, Robina, but greet for me mair than yersel,
to think what I hae borne in my ain hoose this
night!

CHAPTER XIV.

EVA MORRIS.

While Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor, now perfectly restored to good-humour, helped himself abundantly to the cold beef and pickles, and drank off tumbler after tumbler of strong whisky punch, of which potation Miss Mc.Prudie, nothing loth, partook—Eva Morris, pale, aghast, and all sleep driven rudely away by her wild alarm for the effect this blow might have on Mr. Luxmore, repaired, with tears in her eyes, and a flutter at her heart to help Robina to prepare for her journey.

Of course had Robina felt one particle of real love for her generous and devoted suitor, her position would now have been one of ineffable anguish; and judging by her own warm heart, Eva so considered it. But had Robina been in the fairy Palace of Truth, instead of at Bruce House, sitting on her little bed, her handkerchief to her eyes, or her face hidden in Eva's bosom, she would have been seen with a face, half hope and half regret, half glee and half reluctance, preparing for her journey with a light step and a not reluctant hand. Instead of broken sobs, deep sighs, and little sham hysterics—instead of ejaculations of 'Oh, Eva! what a blow! poor Luxmore! poor Robina! what can I do! oh, cruel father! oh stern fate! oh lost, oh sad one!'—instead, we say, of all this, accompanied by an apparent listless inability and despair, which threw on poor Eva all the burthen of packing all her things—she would have been heard soliloquizing thus, as she now briskly, now doubtingly, stowed her finery in her boxes.

"Well, all may be for the best! who can tell? Certainly poor Luxmore is most ardently devoted to me, most passionately in love; but then (and she glanced into her little oval looking-glass) that may nor be quite so much owing to his merit as to my charms; he is very old and lame and crooked and ugly—why should not this new lover be as rich, and fond and handsome too? Think if Fitzgeorge had Mr. Luxmore's wealth, and was as much in love, and he would have been if I had let him—how nice that would have been! And after all, if this lover papa wishes me to have is not as rich, as generous, and as devoted as poor Luxmore, I can easily get Mr. Luxmore back again. His rejection is not my doing. He always praises dutiful daughters, and once presumed to dilate on their making obedient wives. So he cannot blame me; besides I have no choice—I must obey papa, or be locked up on bread and water. And now I think of it, even if after all I do marry Mr. Luxmore, he will be none the worse

for a little doubt. I think since he has made so *very, very* sure of me, he is a shade less entirely devoted and attentive. All men, as Miss Twitch says, are the better for being kept in fear. He danced twice with Laura Venables, and has several times praised Eva's eyes. At first he never seemed to see any one but me. As for his presents, I shall keep all the valuable ones till I see how things turn out. I'll make up a parcel for Miss Mc.Prudie of the old bon-bon boxes, and such things, and give Eva a hint to tell him I return them to keep her quiet, but not the others while my heart is still his own. I am a little tired of Bruce House and poor Luxmore; and how jealous all the girls will be of my having another lover and another offer before they have had one. It must be Sir Davie Mc.Dougal, I fear; but though I didn't like him when I was a child, I might admire him now. I've quite forgotten what he really was. Poor Luxmore! however this will try his faith and his constancy; and

what heroine was ever quietly married to her first lover, no duel, no rival, no fun at all. Oh, it's better as it is, and I doat on a long journey; who can tell what adventures I may have. Mademoiselle La Vanille has often quizzed poor Luxmore, and Laura Venables told me Miss Twitch said, she wouldn't marry such a little crooked, limping fellow, if he could make her a Duchess. . . But I shall see what papa's choice turns out, and not make my eyes red, or blister my cheeks, for Mr. Luxmore or any one else. After all, men love us to please themselves, not us, and I dare say if I had the small-pox, like Miss Fitzosborne, he'd never look at me again!"

Such would have been Robina's soliloquy in the Palace of Truth. As it was, she left on Eva's mind the conviction that she was more worthy of Luxmore than Eva had ever before believed her to be. Duty to her father alone seemed to prevent her writing to her lover, and if she did not send him any specific message, she appeared to expect that Eva would find an

opportunity of letting him know all her anguish at this terrible decree—her heart-rending struggles—her cruel conflict between love and duty—and her unwilling sacrifice of her heart's warm promptings to a sense of honour and filial love. How many women like Robina are, in all that regards their affections, mere actresses; they seem to delight in counterfeiting all those emotions, which, if real, they would die rather than betray. Tears, sham swoons, hysterics, clandestine correspondences, and a thousand other reprehensible follies, are constantly and gratuitously carried on by women in the case of men, for whom the result often proves, that they really cared little or nothing. Whether it be, as Rochefocault says, *L'occupation d'esprit que donne une affaire de cœur, la soif d'être aimé*, or whether it be an egotistical love of playing the heroine, and making a sensation, who shall decide? But I am sure all who have studied the female heart, must see that among its meaner and more common-place specimens,

the affectation of love in its more romantic form is far more common than its reality, and that is constantly assumed where no interest prompts, where no object is to be gained, but frequently at an absurd risk of character and comfort.

The grey dawn which found Luxmore tossing in uneasy dreams of Robina in his lonely chamber, saw the idol of so true a heart, step with assumed reluctance, her kerchief to her eyes, into a post-chaise, with her father, who from three hours devoted to whisky and Miss Mc.Prudie, arose, singing snatches of Scotch drinking songs. Robina, having with a glance ascertained that all her treasures in the shape of trunk and band-box were safe, received the cold farewell of Miss Mc.Prudie, and the tearful adieus of the deceived and sympathizing Eva. Poor Eva ! cold and pale and but half dressed, she stood in the little garden fronting Bruce House, watching the chaise till it was out of sight.

She felt a strange interest in the destiny of the idol of one so unspeakably dear to her, and

tears for his probable anguish at the loss of another poured down her pale cheeks.

She was hastening back to her little bed, to obtain two hours' rest before the usual hour of rising, when she met Miss Mc.Prudie, who, excessively out of temper at the whole affair, and particularly at the paltry nature of the only presents Robina had left behind, and which she had hastened to take possession of, said :—

“As it is broad daylight, Miss Morris, it is absurd for you to go to bed again, particularly as I hear from all quarters complaints of the great neglect of the needlework you have shown lately. The situation of Clothes' Teacher, Miss Morris, in an establishment like this, neither is, nor can be, a sinecure; I must beg you will first be so obliging as to get a cup of tea and a plate of toast ready—here are the keys—and to bring it to me in my bed; I am not a young person, Miss Morris, and things that are mere little exciting changes to the young, are very trying to their elders. You will then devote

the time till the young ladies rise, to their linen, and after my breakfast I beg you will go to my drawing-room and complete the new chintz cover of the large sofa ; it ought to have been done long ago."

Poor Eva, wearied and sick at heart, did her best ; she took the tea and toast to the old tyrant in her bed, who found it so good that she deigned to authorize Eva to take a similar refreshment herself.

This the poor girl did, by the kitchen fire where she had prepared it ; she then brought down her large basket of linen, and had begun the hopeless task of repairing the wanton rents of a dozen romps, when the warmth of the cheerful fire, the universal quiet, and exhausted nature, united to throw her into a sweet sleep, in which she remained till she was roused by the watchman calling the cook at the area door, in the poetical words of—

"Awake, awake, my fairest,
My bosom beats for thee ;

Oh, give thy spruce young watchman,
A cosy cup of tea ;
A plate of butter'd toast, love,
A rasher rich and rare ;
I call thee up betimes, love,
Be my reward thy care."

While these words were chanted at the window of a little room near the kitchen, where the cook, house-maid, and parlour-maid slept together, Eva heard a giggling from within ; then commenced a regular knocking from without, and a loud orthodox cry of, "Cook, cook ! it's half-past six !"

"I'm a coming, I'm a coming—wait a bit," said the cook. "I'm a coming, Jemmy dear ! Don't go for to knock the door down, and fluster my narves. In ten minutes I'll have a good fire, and somewhat nice for ee."

"Well, look sharp," said Jemmy, "for if you won't, I knows them as will, and thank ye too. I'll be back in ten minutes, and if all aint ready cumfable, I'm off to Sal at Eger-ton's."

Not at all anxious to come in contact with the enamoured cook and her 'cupboard lover,' poor Eva caught up her work-box and huge basket, of clothes, to be mended, and before the cook entered the kitchen, Eva had arrived, panting with haste, in her odious little work-room.

CHAPTER XV

THE POOR TEACHER.

Poor Eva Morris! step-child of fortune! the restless discomforts and odious fatigues of the night were no excuse for her neglecting any one of her wearisome morning duties.

She had to give out, in proper repair, the linen and stockings of the twelve destructive hoydens—to assist at their toilets—to endure their idle tricks and pranks—to correct exercises, hear lessons, and (worst of all!) with a fine ear and exquisite taste, to superintend the

discordant and monotonous practice of those in the school who were most backward in music.

This purgatory lasted till the breakfast bell rang, when Miss Twitch might be seen presiding at one end, and Miss Fitzosborne at the other, of the breakfast table; Mademoiselle la Vanille had manœuvred to get a little table for herself near the window in summer, and close to the fire in winter; and at a comfortless black writing-table at the other end of the room, Eva usually sat down with the last infusion of Miss Twitch's congou and spite.

Conversation at meals was prohibited, except among the teachers, who spoke in innuendo, and a language of their own.

The departure of Miss Mc.Grigor, now generally known, was the subject of their earnest discussion, and as all were aware that Eva Morris knew more on the subject than any one else, so a place at the high table, an average cup of tea, and a square or two of toast, would have been gladly tendered to her in return for

any information she would have given on the subject. But not only was Eva far too dejected and depressed in mind to care for any bodily comforts, but she shrank from any allusion to a subject so deeply interesting to the only being whose gentle kindness had awakened the holiest feelings of her heart; to hear his passionate, alighted, and rejected love tauntingly discussed by the mean plebeian lips of Miss Fitzosborne and Miss Twitch was more than in her present nervous and excited state she could endure. Far better could she bear the gibes and jeers of the disappointed curiosity, and gladly did she exchange their lavish though implied abuse of her, for one light comment on or jest at him.

At length the tedious half hour of breakfast was over, and when poor Eva took her music-book for the purpose of an hour's practice by herself in the music room—(one of the few atoning luxuries of her wretched existence) Miss Fitzosborne, bitterly and with august

hauteur, informed her that Miss Mc.Prudie's orders were that Miss Morris should do nothing else until the new sofa cover in the back drawing-room was completed. "So put down your music-book and get your needle-case, Miss Morris; it would be better for you if you were as fond of the latter as of the former."

"Quite true," said Miss Twitch; "no good work-woman need be a beggar; but a thousand musical geniuses go squalling with blind husbands and ragged children through the streets of London."

"Blind husbands!" tittered Miss Fitzosborne; "capital! you are so droll, dear! Love is blind you know; I fancy I see Eva Morris with some fellow of whose eyes one can only see the whites!" She yelling out her favorite, "Di piam mi balza il cor."

"What for you say dat?" said Mademoiselle La Vamille, reddening with the ready wrath of a Frenchwoman; "Eva need not have a blind man—he would no see her pretty face—a

blind husband would be better for oders dan for *she* !”

“Certainly !” said Miss Twitch.

“Certainly !” echoed Miss Fitzosborne, “people who dye their hair, and love the red red rose so much that they wear it on their cheeks—such would find a blind lover very convenient.”

“What you say ? what you mean ?” shrieked the half-comprehending but quite enraged demoiselle ; “repeat dat, I beg.”

But at this moment Mr. Gillespie was announced, and none of the ladies wishing to appear as termagants in his eyes, the English teachers turned silently away, and the French lady resumed her knitting with increased vehemence, muttering to herself, “*Dieu ! sont elles vilanies ! sont elles bêtes ? je me vengerai un jour !—en attendant allons courage !*”

As for poor Eva, she had early learnt the art of bearing taunt, insult, and sarcasm in silence, and so, with a glance of meek reproach

which would have touched any human heart, she had quietly hastened with her work-box and basket to the back drawing-room, there, with aching head and weary eyes, to rig out a stubborn and ricketty old sofa, in a new dress made out of an old curtain.

She had not been long at her ungrateful task, when Miss Mc.Prudie, evidently dressed for an important visit, looked in; one glance told Eva, that she held in her hand the large and fatal letter Robina had told her, her father had entrusted to her for the unhappy Luxmore.

Miss Mc.Prudie had just begun a series of fault-findings, when Mr. Luxmore's knock arrested her. Eva was about to snatch up her basket—start from her knees, on which she was groping to fit the cover to the bandy legs of the old sofa—and dart out of the room, when Miss Mc.Prudie stopped her.

"Na, na," she said, "gang na' awa'—what for shall you lose your time, and back the sofa

cover? The mon and his luvie affairs are naething to you—bide you here; I'll e'en close the door, and if you mind your work, ye'll na' be minding onything else."

So saying, Miss Mc.Prudie sailed into the front drawing-room, closed the doors, and left poor Eva on her knees, pale and panting, an unwilling listener to the tortures about to be inflicted on one, she, in her young and girlish idolatry, thought she could have died to save or even to solace.

The excitement of her feelings so quickened her senses, that she could hear not only every word, but every sigh, every start, every gasp of the disappointed and heart-stricken lover. Her needle dropped from her cold and paralyzed hand, and her face sunk on the arm of the old sofa, without which she almost felt she must have fallen on the ground.

"And noo ye hae perused Sir Grigor Mc. Grigor's letter, Mr. Luxmore," she heard Miss Mc.Prudie, with ill-concealed venom, exclaim,

"ye can joodge for yersel what gude there is in troobling yersel, or ony one else, ony mair aboot the motter. Ater a' it's na great loss—and as the auld saying has it, 'there are as gude fish in the say as ever were caught.'"

"Do not speak so lightly," exclaimed Luxmore, in a voice in which Eva fancied she heard a sort of sob; "do not speak so coldly of what to me is the loss of all that makes life-dear! You tell me of the father's cruel and tyrannical rejection of my suit, and I can bear to hear it, strange and unexpected as it is; but you cannot tell me that Robina, fond and feeling angel of this cold world, that she can withdraw her young and virgin affections at a moment's notice, in obedience to so harsh and inhuman an order—affections so often evinced, so warmly given, and so well deserved! You cannot tell me Robina is no more the same!"

"Deed, then, I think, Mr. Luxmore, she's mooch the same—a light, vain, flaunting young creature, with little natural merit except a

pretty face, and owing a' her acquired graces to my mair than maternal care. I've made a' I could of the lassie's tolents, and accomplieashments, and apparent discretion I can and do bestow on a' my pupils; but I canna give them hearts if they've nane o' their ain; and the way in which Miss Robeena Mc.Grigor took leave o' me—me sa lang a very guardian angel to her, just conveenced me that she's quite without grotitude and notural affection."

"But did she show no regret, no anguish, no concern for me?" asked Luxmore, with the blind egotism of love.

"If she did na' care for me, after a' I've dune for her and been to her, there's little hope she could trouble much about ony other!"

"But her first, her only love, her affianced, her all but wedded lover—oh, in pity tell me that she wept, tell me she loves me still."

"It's just in pity, Mr. Luxmore, that I'll tell ye na lees—and deed if there's ony pity

going, it's mysel should come in for a large share; here, because I favoured your suit and let you come coorting the lassie, her father, the great terrifying fellow, has abused me to my face—shook his fist at me—clutched my arm so that I have the mark yet under my sleeve—ca'd me a motchmaker, and I ken na what a'—and wha's mair than a', threatened to ruin my establishment and break up my connexion. Eh! and the waur o' it is, he has the power, and for aught I ken, after thirty years of drudgery and toil, I'm a ruined woman the day!"

"Oh no! no! no!" said Luxmore, too amiable even in his own sorrow to overlook another's well-acted distress—"that must never be; any injury you have suffered in my cause I must repair; tell me, how can I atone?"

"To atone entirely is out of your power, Mr. Luxmore, for I hae been inscolted and threatened in my ain house for your sake, and for pleading your cause—and Mc.Prudie's dochter kens no atonement for sic inscolts; but wha' ye

can do, I think as a gentleman you should do, and that quickly."

"Only tell me how; to you I owe the only real happiness I ever tasted—to you I owe Robina's love—what can I do?"

"Ye hae interest with Lord ——; there's mony a sma' place at coort at his disposal, for leddies o' gude fomily and sma' fortunes; if I had a pension of aboot twa hoondred a year, and rooms at Hampton Coort, or some sic place, I'd e'en be content, before Sir Grigor's revenge breaks up Bruce Hoose, to break it up mysel."

"I will do my utmost," faltered Luxmore, "I will go to Lord —— to-morrow."

"Ye canna weel do less," said Miss Mc. Prudie; "I've heard o' apartments, a pension, coals and candles, besides other perquisites in sic situations as I covet, and ——"

Here Miss Twitch came hastily to say that Lady Lofty was below with a daughter, and was most anxious to see Miss Mc. Prudie for a

few minutes previously to a final arrangement.

"I'll be bock agen soon," said Miss Mc. Prudie to Mr. Luxmore; "there's the "Morning Post"—it'll amuse you till I come bock."

Miss Twitch cast a triumphant glance at the pale and agitated features of one, whose indifference to her charms, and worship of another's, had made him peculiarly odious to her, and then with a suppressed titter she followed Miss Mc.Prudie down-stairs.

Poor Luxmore! he had taken up the "Morning Post" mechanically, while cold eyes were on him, but he was no sooner alone, than flinging down the paper and covering his eyes with his hand, he yielded to the wild, deep anguish of his disappointed heart.

A groan from the very depths of that heart fell on Eva's ear. Almost unconscious what she did, she started up, gently opened the door, drew near the couch on which Mr. Luxmore sate, and sinking on her knees beside him, she

raised to her lips a hand which hung cold and listless by his side.

At the touch of that warm young lip, he started; for a moment he fancied that bowed head was his lost Robina's; but intent on comforting him, and without one thought of self, the enthusiastic and devoted girl raised to his a face flushed with intense feeling; and holding his hand while she spoke, she said rapidly, first stealing a fearful glance round the room:—

“Cheer up! it is not true; Robina is gone, but gone against her will—in tears, in anguish, but in dutiful obedience to a cruel father!”

“My sweet girl!” cried the transported lover, seeing she paused and again looked round in alarm—“fear not—none shall harm you—tell me all—she loves me yet, she wept, say so, and I will bless you!”

“She wept, now in wild despair, and now in listless anguish in my bosom; she is gone, I think, to her home in the North, far, far away; but what of that? her heart is with you. Your

presents she would not return, not from the unworthy motive Miss Mc.Prudie imputes to her, but because they are the pledges of a love she will not outrage, slight, or disappoint—I must go.”

“Not yet! not yet! tell me more.”

“More! I have no more to tell, and to tell you even this, I peril much.”

“What, fair and kind one, what do you peril?”

“A wretched home, sir! but the only one which I can call my own. It is a dull, a dreary, and a cold retreat, but were I driven hence, I should have no roof to shelter, no hole wherein to hide my miserable head!”

“Oh, but you shall have a happy home, my sweet girl; for the great, great mercy you have done me this day, you shall have a home ere long with my Robina! with me!”

“With you!” faltered Eva; “oh, no such joy can await me.”

“The greater joy of living with Robina shall

be yours for this day's sake, my girl ; she loves me ! well, then, I will wed her if the congregated world should oppose and defy me, and when we are wedded, you, sweet Eva, shall come and dwell with us in our lovely home. You shall be Robina's chosen friend, and if it pleases Heaven to bless us with children, you shall help to make them like—Robina !”

“ Like you !” faltered Eva, less dazzled and enraptured by this prospect than one so lonely and so sad might have been expected to be. “ I shall live on the hope you hold out—it is the first hope I have ever had any right to indulge—what a luxury it is !—and now I must go ! do not forget me !”

“ Forget you ! forget one who has restored me to Robina !”

As he spoke, he parted the rich hair on her fair brow, and with a brother's tenderness he pressed his lips upon it.

What was there in the soft and calm caress to send the warm blood to Eva's brow, and

leave it even paler than before? What was there to make her heart throb so wildly, and then sink into a deeper dejection? And why does the poor teacher, the despised, the friendless, the forlorn, with this new prospect of happiness and peace, and prompt emancipation from the thralldom of a life, fall on her knees again when she has closed the door between them, and weep with a restless bitterness new even to her?

As for Mr. Luxmore, the old world of care and sorrow and bitter mortification seems to be swept away as by a deluge, and he stands in a new bright scene, all sunshine and all hope. He cannot sit tamely there, and await Miss McPrudie's return; he cannot waste the golden moments which, well spent, may enable him to regain his Robina. With the elastic step of happy love, he leaves the room where he had known the keenest anguish of his bitter life; and leaving word with the servant that Miss McPrudie must write to him in the evening, as

in the morning he should leave town ; he sped along the crowded streets, seeing no one, heeding no one, feeling and knowing only that he had not lost Robina.

CHAPTER XVI.

LIFE'S DARK SIDE.

As Mr. Luxmore, intent only on Robina, and a thousand new-born schemes for tracing her and making her his own for ever, sped along Portland Place on his way to St. James's, he was aroused from a delicious reverie by a touch on the shoulder, and looking somewhat angrily round, he met the gloomy eye and long face of Colonel Dunkeld, an old friend, to whom the reader was introduced at that wedding where first Luxmore beheld Robina.

"Why, man!" said Dunkeld, with a bitter

attempt at a joke, "one would think you had hopes of the wool-sack!"

"Eh! what?" replied the startled lover—"why so, pray?"

"Because your wits are evidently gone wool-gathering, to fill it—eh! what can you be thinking of? Here I've been running after you for I know not how long, and calling you till I'm hoarse—I declare at the crossing I really expected to see you run over."

"And be in at the death, eh?" said Luxmore, smiling.

"Exactly, and an easy death too, if one could be, as the papers say, 'killed on the spot.' I'm sure, to my mind, death is preferable to life—weary, weary life! I declare it gets worse and worse—I never enjoyed, and now I hate it. As the poet says, "life is nothing but buttoning and unbuttoning"—the same dull routine, the same heavy monotonous succession of dreary hours—I wish it were over, don't you?"

"An hour ago perhaps Luxmore might have

answered 'Yes;' but now, full of new hopes, and the exciting conviction that he was loved, mourned, desired, the world seemed to him a fairy-land, and he answered with a kindling eye and flushing cheek :—"Nay, Dunkeld, I own this world has many charms for me; I never felt less disposed to leave this sunny scene of flowers and song for the dark vault, and the red earth-worm, than at this moment."

Colonel Dunkeld stopped, caught him by the button, (he was a regular button-holder was Colonel Dunkeld) gazed into his face, shook his head, and said: "Luxmore, you *must* be cracked; forgive me, my dear fellow! but when in this atmosphere of fog and smoke, an easterly wind blowing in your teeth, prowling along Portland Place at noon—the very haunt of Solitude and Gloom—you talk of a world of sunshine, flowers and song, I can only say, go home, send for Burrows, send for Monro, and a brace of keepers, for on my honour I believe you're stark staring mad."

“Well, if I am, mine at least is a happy madness. In my present mood I am unlikely to harm myself or any one else, for I love the world and all its creatures; but you, Dunkeld—you who see nothing but solitude and gloom in this bright metropolis of a lovely world—you who can turn from the fresh air and the pleasant streets, where happy Industry speeds on foot, and elegant Affluence rolls along—to covet the damp vault, and the earth-worm—you, I think, should lose no time in securing doctors and keepers, for *you must* be mad, and that with a far from harmless madness.”

“Well! well! of course we all think ourselves, and ourselves alone, sane, Luxmore! I am sure you are the last man in the world I ever expected to hear enlarge on the happiness of this life, and the delights of this world. Why, man, I remember when you thought it, with me, a scene of monotonous and wearing trial.”

"And now I think it one of varied and intense enjoyment."

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! I little thought it would come to this. Ah, well, in my boyish days, when life was new, and an arch impostor, called Hope, deceived even me, now and then I remember a few brief moments of the delusion you now labour under, but they did not last. My mother was a Darkside of Darkside; my father sole heir of the old family of Dunkeld of Dunkeld; I never saw them smile—they saw nothing to smile at, nor do I. People talk of looking on the bright side of things. I never could see a bright side to anything."

"Were you never in love?" asked Luxmore.

"In love? yes! but what is that but being in misery?"

"Nay, to be in love is to be in a heaven on earth."

"A hell rather! for what fiends more cruel than Jealousy, Doubt, Desire?"

"And what angels so bright as Hope, Affection, Confidence, Esteem?"

"What rack like Suspense?"

"What rapture like a maiden's sweet consent, and first half tearful avowal of a mutual flame?"

"And then the marriage! the gradual and monotonous disenchantment."

"Then you own to the previous enchantment?"

"The dark enchantments of a gloomy sorceress—I own to them. And then ennui, distaste, and discontent, peevish reproach, jealous watchfulness, wearisome *tête-a-têtes*, or more wearisome crowds of ill-masked foes—children either perverse and deformed, or, beautiful and fond, to be torn from us when their beauty most delights, their fondness most bewitches us. Look at my fate! see how I doated on my girl—my only, my lovely one! She left me for a brute she had met at a few balls. He had a winning tongue and a fair form, but he must

have been a brute, or he would have loved me, and I could then have lived with my child. As it was, he soon grew weary of appearing to welcome me, kept from me my heart's darling, and at last took her to India, where she pines, and where in all probability she will die. These are the joys of matrimony and paternity. My wife did not long survive our child's cruel exile, and I care not how soon I follow her!"

There were tears in the old Colonel's eyes as he spoke—they went to Luxmore's heart.

"Oh she, your child, will return and be to you——"

"What? She can never be mine again—mine only! She is *his*—she bears his name—she is the mother of his children—she can never live for me alone as she did before she ever saw his accursed face. But enough of this; report says you are in love."

"Well!"

"Well! anything but well! In love too

with a chit, a baby, a puppet in the hands of a designing old matchmaker."

"I cannot hear this, Colonel Dunkeld. The lady I am engaged to is the pride of her own sex, and the admiration of ours, and even were she not so, as my affianced, I expect you to name her with respect."

"Why she's young enough to be your daughter!"

Luxmore winced.

"She accepts you for your fortune; no girl of her age *can* love a man like you."

"You are mistaken there."

"Not I; they are all for outward show; take my word for it, she'll be the plague of your life, flirt with your friends, ruin your fortune, break your heart, poison your poor remnant of days, and make you covet the grave as much as I do. Good bye—I'm going to take a drive to look at the new cemetery. I say, if you do marry the girl, be on your

guard; the father's a needy man and a speculator; the mother, a haughty Scotch vixen; a fine life they'll lead you all together. Well, well, I've warned you—adieu. If we ever meet again, (and in this world there's nothing more uncertain), I suppose it won't be till you're noosed one way or the other—it scarcely matters which; the cunning cockneys make the altar and the halter one. I shall never see that unnatural joy in your face again; and I declare it makes me more uncomfortable than it would to see you with all your old gloom—it is so absurd to be glad in a world like this. Once more adieu.”

“Thank Heaven he's off at last!” thought Luxmore, saddened, in spite of himself, by the ominous croakings of the old prophet of evil. “I declare he has quite darkened my heart, and sickened my spirit; I must go and shut myself up with Robina's sweet smiling picture for an hour to restore the tone of my mind.

Old enough to be her father! Pshaw, what of that! If I am young enough to win her love, I am young enough to be her lover—her lover! her husband! Oh, am I not too blest?"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REIGNING VICE.

Miss Mc.Prudie was not a little disappointed, when she returned to the drawing-room, (after a very satisfactory interview with Lady Lofty) to find her victim gone.

However, the message he had left, requesting her to write to him, left no doubt on her mind, that her object was gained, and that she should, for injuries sustained in his cause, obtain from his ideas of justice and compassion, his powerful interest with Lord ——; this she looked upon as equivalent to a comfortable

and even aristocratic sinecure—elegant apartments, coals, candles, and many other perquisites.

Now Miss Mc.Prudie had one weakness—a weakness carefully concealed in general, and only to be suspected from that inevitable tell-tale of such secrets—a scarlet tip to her thin nose. The only person who ever shared her confidence or her secret, was Miss Twitch.

Miss Twitch, as we have seen, had a mean and toady spirit, and would probably have affected to share Miss Mc.Prudie's tastes, even had she not really done so; but however this might be at first, the fatal taste soon actually grew upon her, and from *pretending* to like whisky punch, just that she might catch up the secrets Miss Mc.Prudie let out under its influence, and make herself doubly dear to her employer, she, alas! soon acquired a fatal and boundless taste for the beverage herself.

From the time that this occurred, Miss Twitch gradually lost the beauty for which she

had been remarkable ; it was not a beauty of a high order certainly, but still it was beauty, consisting in bright eyes, red lips, white teeth, a clear red and white, abundant light hair, and a well-rounded shape. Her manners too lost their even composure, her temper its cheerful smoothness.

At the end of two years of frequent *tête-à-tête* with Miss Mc.Prudie, Miss Twitch was fearfully altered-in person, temper, and manners ; her eyes were dim and weak, her eyelids red, an eruption settled in her face, imparting to it, especially her nose, a hot and purple hue ; her lips looked parched and black, her teeth began to decay, her hair fell off, and her figure shrunk so that her skin hung like a loose dress around her. She grew irritable, spiteful, and uncertain, and fits of deep dejection succeeded to bursts of causeless hilarity.

Miss Fitzosborne suspected the secret of all this, but jealous of the greater favour shown the junior teacher, she kept her counsel, and

confidently awaited the result, making herself friends, hoarding up all she could, and expecting the time when Miss Mc.Prudie would probably retire, and she herself purchase the headship of the establishment and its excellent connexion.

It was after dinner that Miss Mc.Prudie invited Miss Twitch to come and take a cup of coffee with her in her own room. And it was after the coffee, that the door being secured, and all quiet and comfort, that a jug of whisky punch was brewed, and, alas ! soon dispatched. Under its influence Miss Mc.Prudie began to reveal her hopes and expectations, and under that of a second and stronger potation, she confided to Miss Twitch the contents of a letter she had written to Mr. Luxmore, enlarging on her sufferings and probable ruin in his cause, and pointing out earnestly and briefly how he might atone to her.

“ Now this letter, my love,” said Miss Mc.Prudie, nodding, and in a half tipsy voice, “ I

want sealed and sent. Do you see to it, my sweet girl!—there's a darling!—take another drop—here give it me—I'll read it."

Miss Mc.Prudie tried—in vain—she set her ruffle on fire—dropped the wax, and fell asleep in her chair.

Miss Twitch seeing this, emptied the jug—replaced in a cupboard, which she locked, all the paraphernalia—lemons, sugar, glasses, and whisky bottle, now empty. She was much younger than Miss Mc.Prudie, and so much stronger, that what had quite upset the old lady, only excited her, and made her unusually merry and talkative.

Miss Mc.Prudie having upset the light, Miss Twitch took the letter and went down-stairs, intending to seal it there. On the stairs she met a maid-servant, who told her that Miss Fitzosborne and Mademoiselle La Vanille were out with the young ladies, and that Mr. Gillespie was below, and very anxious to speak either to her or Miss Mc.Prudie. Aware that Miss

Mc.Prudie was in no state to be seen, Miss Twitch hurried down. Her face was flushed, and there was something flighty in her manner; this, and a well known odour of whisky, which entered the room with her, awakened the shrewd Gillespie to a suspicion of the fact.

Mr. Gillespie carried in his hand a large case, containing a splendid framed and glazed specimen of penmanship, and the object of his visit was to know when and where he was likely to meet with Mr. Luxmore.

"You're just in time, and only just in time, I can tell you," said Miss Twitch, pertly; "the Gent's off to-morrow morning, a wild goose chase I dare say after the little chit who has jilted him—jilted him as he deserves, for taking up with a green apple, when ripe and rosy ones nod on the tree. I've something here for his Lordship; I see your petition is well framed, and this is well framed too, only in another manner, I can tell you."

It was easy for Mr. Gillespie to see that his

friend Miss Twitch was in an unusually communicative and talkative vein, and he forthwith resolved to turn her volubility to account; but an accident made this almost needless. With the imprudence natural to her bewildered and excited state, Miss Twitch left Miss Mc.Prudie's letter on the table, while she ran upstairs in search of wax and seal, quick as thought, Mr. Gillespie made himself master of its contents, and by the time Miss Twitch re-appeared, his plan was formed.

"I don't think Miss Mc.Prudie will long head this establishment," said Miss Twitch; "I have my reasons for what I say, but mums the word. I only wish I knew a good sensible man, with a little ready money he could embark in a promising speculation; I'd add my savings to his venture, and we might make it answer between us—eh, my boy?" she added, with a familiarity which Gillespie traced to its true source, 'the bottle.'

The hint, however, he did not choose to take;

he felt *quite* sure that Miss McPrudie had more thousands than Miss Twitch could boast hundreds ; to make those thousands his, and to get his old tyrant into his power, was what he had set his avaricious and vindictive heart upon.

However, he had tact enough to sigh, and wish he had the smallest sum he could embark in a venture that promised so much bliss. Miss Twitch sighed too, and was about to propose he should take a glass of something 'comfortable,' when the light echoes of many feet were heard at the entrance door, and Gillespie started up.

"As I am going to Mr. Luxmore's, I will take charge of your letter," he said, with studied carelessness.

"Nay, it is not mine," she replied ; "I don't write to bachelors——"

"Well, give me the letter!" he cried ; "I must be off—I would not miss Luxmore for the world. Farewell, lovely Miss Twitch.

He took the letter from her half reluctant hand—and was gone. Miss Twitch had a sort of presentiment that she had not done right to trust so important a missive to one in whom Miss Mc. Prudie never placed the slightest confidence; but she thought it better to keep her own counsel; and aware she could not well do it in her present state, she pretended a violent head-ache, and repaired to her bed to lie down till tea. We grieve to add that from behind her pillow, she drew a bottle containing some spirituous liquor; at first she resolved only to taste it, but this fatal, lowest, and most degrading of all fascinations prevailed—each sup was longer than the last, and in the end she did not withdraw her lips from the bottle till it was fairly exhausted, and then having just sense enough left to conceal it under her pillow, the once blooming and happy, but now lost and bloated Miss Twitch fell into the wretched feverish sleep of inebriety.

Alas! alas! in all classes and all stations,

how frightfully common is that loathsome propensity become! from the aristocratic beauty, exhausted soul and body by the excess of those amusements, (innocent only in moderation,) who recruits her fluttering and fainting spirit at her tedious toilette, by *sal volatile*, *juleps*, lavender, eau de Cologne, or any other lady-like disguise of the same exciting potion which takes the ragged Irish beggar from the pawnbroker's to the gin shop—through all classes of the female world, it is sadly to be feared that the horrible, engrossing, and degrading love of spirits is frightfully on the increase; what bumpers of champagne have we not seen the most delicate flowers of the ball-room, who should sip nothing but the crystal wave, imbibe, with an impunity that speaks of a long apprenticeship! How great in many houses, (where few would suspect it,) is the private consumption of spirits, and liqueurs more ruinous still.

This age boasts, and justly, of the growth of temperance among its sons. The five-bottle

men are no more ; but Bacchus is indeed avenged, if instead of the open homage of the sons of England, he secures the private worship of her daughters. At his luring but grovelling shrine, so fatally easy of access to many, Woman lays down all the freshness of her face, her heart, her mind ; a hideous crust seems to gather over her beauty ; a dull inanity, or restless ill-humour, disturbs her temper ; and the mind and heart, once capable of making home a paradise, concentrate all their energies to the private, the disreputable and lonely enjoying of what, in humbler life would be designated by the degrading appellation of dram-drinking.

As there is no habit so easy to form, or so hard to eradicate, as this, of flying to stimulants on the slightest provocation, so too much pains cannot be taken to instil into the minds of the Young a horror of the practice. Parents should be ever on the watch against it ; and those who are no longer blest by the sweet officiousness of

parental love, should steadily guard and watch themselves, for temptations are rife, and the result of yielding, is perdition of soul and body.

Witness the haggard yet excited faces of the London ball-rooms—witness every woman who, under whatever name, seeks by artificial spirits to recruit her own—witness Miss Twitch, once so spruce, so shrewd, so blooming, up with the lark, and busy as the bee, with wit at will and lovers in plenty—now stretched livid and yet bloated in a stupid doze, from which she will awake to all the horrors of a deep dejection, and a maddening head-ache.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LOVER AND THE SCOTCHMAN.

It was evening, and Mr. Luxmore had just dispatched his solitary dinner. "Alone, but not companionless," for before him on the table lay the smiling Psyche face of Robina Mc. Grigor.

Though summer, the air was cold and damp, and as the dining-room was large and lofty, and as Mr. Luxmore, like most deformed and delicate people, was extremely sensible of atmospheric changes, his thoughtful and attached attendants had lighted a bright fire, which gave an air of

comfort to the lonely grandeur of the room—playing with a flickering and life-giving beauty on the family pictures that hung around—lighting up the languishing eyes and snowy bosoms of some of Lely's beauties—throwing out the grim reality of a couple of Luxmores of the time of Holbein—and sparkling over the life-like and fascinating faces of Luxmore's father and mother, whose peerless bloom had been immortalized by the pencil of Sir Joshua.

A tempting dessert lay on the table untouched, in dishes of curiously cut crystal, which glittered like gems; the untasted wine sparkled before him, but Luxmore scarcely knew that it was there. He was in a state of rapt entrancement, anticipating the time when Robina would grace that table, when her portrait should outshine all that now adorned those walls, when every luxury would be doubled and shared at once!

He was in this enraptured mood when Trusman, his butler, who in his plain and gentle-

manly attire looked more like a Doctor than a servant, came noiselessly in to tell him that a person of the name of Gillespie wished to see him, and intimated that he had something of importance to communicate to Mr. Luxmore.

The colour rose to Luxmore's pale temples; this uncouth fellow was connected in his mind with the thought of Robina.

"Admit him, Trueman," he said; and the next moment Trueman ushered in the gaunt Gillespie, (his large parcel in his hand) to his master's presence, and then noiselessly retired.

"Your servant, sir!" said Gillespie, bowing low, not a little awed by the wealth and splendour around him.

"I rejoice to see you, Mr. Gillespie," said Mr. Luxmore, rising with thorough-bred courtesy, and motioning Gillespie to a seat at the table. "Come, your visit will be an inducement to me to take a little wine—help yourself—let me recommend those grapes."

Gillespie put the nectar to his lips—never had he tasted such wine before—he could have worshipped Luxmore.

“And so you have business with me?” said Mr. Luxmore.

“I have indeed, sir! and of a vary delicot and preevate nature.”

Luxmore’s heart bounded, and then stood still! he trembled while Gillespie again filled his glass; but recovering himself he said: “And that parcel, is that connected with your mission?” His voice faltered as he asked, for might it not be some token from Robina?

“Na, na! this pocket is na’ preceesely connected with my preencepal business here, but is just a leetle compliment o’ my ain, to pruve my grotitude for past favours, and my wish to deserve future patronage—your gracious reception o’, and leeberal reward for ain o’ my specimens o’ penmanship, has just set me on preparing you anither, just to mak the pair, and if they’re na use for onything else, they’ll

be mighty gude potterns to hong up some day in the schule room when yer buckled to I ken wha, and ha' mair weans than even ye ken weel what to do wi'. Ah, it's weel to use them betimes to the sight o' gude writing; to my mind there's na peectur half so profeetable, to place before the bonnie wee things."

As he spoke, with an artist's pride, he uncovered and exhibited his new masterpiece—and while he dilated on each curve and flourish, Luxmore, beguiled by the picture he had conjured up of the wee things, that were to profit by it, slid a bank-note into Gillespie's ready hand.

"If I ever have a school-room," he said, "it shall hang there."

"If ye ever hae—would ye hae weans, and na' train them up, mon?" asked the sly Gillespie in a frank bold manner, he thought would please.

He was right; even the sensitive Luxmore

answered—"No, no, if I *do* have weans, as you call them, they shall *not* lack instruction.

"And what for would ye na' hae weans in plenty? and you wi' the bonniest young wee wife in a' England, hout tout, mon; I'll see the day, and that nay sa lang off, ye'll hae mair than enough—and I only say, may they resemble yersel, and the mair the better!"

Luxmore smiled. "And now," he said, "tell me what is this delicate mission."

"Bide a wee, bide a wee—it is a delicot meession—it concerns the affections, Mr. Luxmore—it's neither mair nor less than a luv affair."

"Speak on," faltered Luxmore. "He comes then from Robina," he thought.

"I foncey I'm na' mistaken," said Gillespie, again filling his glass and his plate, "in believing that I address mysel to a mon o' the maist delicot sense of honour, and capable of appreciating and rewarding a constant and devoted passion!"

"You judge me rightly, Gillespie, by Heaven you do!" said Luxmore, grasping the hard hand of the old writing-master.

"You believe, Mr. Luxmore, that woman is not a mere toy for mon's capreece, a bauble to amuse an idle hour; you hae faith in woman's truth and woman's constancy?"

"Greater, Gillespie, greater far than in that of any man on earth."

"Aweel, 'comparisons are odious'—there are constant men too, but if ye kenned a woman gude, geefted, and some say luvly, wha in spite of a' the frowns o' fortune, the opposection o' relatives, and the crosses o' true luv, continued entirely devoted to ain hopeless attoohment, would ye na' weesh to see her rewarded?"

"Gillespie, I would die to recompense her."

"And if ye kenned a mon whose heart was a' her ain—wha's only wish was to be hers for ever—wha pined for naething else but to ca' her his—what would ye wish him?"

“Wish him! why married to her—married in spite of all obstacles, all friends, or rather foes; for those who would part them are no friends of either; this lovely, constant, devoted woman is——”

“Jist Miss Mc.Prudie!”

“Miss Mc.Prudie!”

“The same, and the mon’s jist mysel’!”

Mute with astonishment and dismay sate Mr. Luxmore; but after a brief pause, the sense of the ridiculous triumphed, and he laughed. After all, this absurd affair had nothing to do with him; it could not affect his pursuit of Robina; it was a momentary pang to find Gillespie was no emissary of hers; but that pang over, he checked his laughter, and said: “You love Miss Mc.Prudie—is that what you mean?”

“Preceesely! in early youth we were affianced; ‘hard Fate and iron Fortune’ separated us—Poverty forbad the banns o’ our wedlock—Ruin came to her hearth—Despair to my heart;

but Luvè would not give way to either Ruin or Despair! She set up a schule in the Sooth, and I became a writing-master to be ever near her. Noo, leesten; she has perilled her connexion, her prospects, her very existence to serve you—her estoblishment, by the vindeec-tive influence o' your affianced one's father, tothers and must fa'! She kens your influence wi' men in power—she claims it, as weel she may! But listen—she is a maiden, and a dochter o' the hoose o' Mc.Prudie, and to be a Queen she would na' own to you her luvè for me. She asks your interest for hersel' alone, and in this letter her modesty prefers naither boon; but if ye would really serve *her*, wha's ruin your happier luvè has caused, mak *me* independent; for ain dacent sinecure tenable by a woman, there are feefy lucrative ones for men to be hod for the asking. She troosts this to me—here is a leest o' some four now vacant, ony ain o' which would enable me to morry her. I doot na' a letter fra you to Lord O—

would secure me this—or maybe this—or if ye could see his Lordship, a word might gang further than a line."

"I start at day-break for the North," said Luxmore, "but push that desk here—what pen and ink can do to serve you, shall be done. Poor, poor Miss Mc.Prudie! I little thought when she promoted my courtship, that I should repay her with a husband!"

"The husband o' her choice, the lover o' her youth!"

"I think we may make pretty sure of one o' these," said Luxmore, looking at the list; "his Lordship owes me something, and it is the first favour I have asked. One of them I think you will get."

"Could ye na' mak it two?"

"No," said Luxmore, reddening, "by trying to do so, you would lose your chance of one."

"I was jesting, naething mair—my heart's sae light—I'm like a wee birdie!"

Luxmore wrote; Gillespie watched him like

a wolf. The letter was eloquent and powerful.

"Deliver this yourself," he said, "as early to-morrow as you can; write me the result, directed, 'Post-office, Glasgow,' and tell Miss McPrudie, when you go to her with your appointment, that I thought that was the best answer I could send to her letter!"

"She'll be o' the same opeenion, sir," said Gillespie, his eyes flashing with joy. "And noo, gude night, sir, and the blessing o' twa fond hearts be wi' ye. When we meet again, we'll be twa jolly bridegrooms, I'm thinking—gude night, sir."

"Good night, Gillespie—I wish you joy!—farewell!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CHANGE.

The first part of Robina's journey with her father was dull and comfortless indeed. The night he had spent in company with Miss Mc. Prudie and her whisky punch, disposed him for a succession of long naps during the day. Well wrapped up in his Mc.Grigor tartan, a white cotton night-cap on his head, and over that a red silk handkerchief tied under his chin, he fell asleep, a frown on his brow, and a growl being the last sound that saluted his daughter's ear. He occasionally awaked at the inns where they stopped to change horses, refused

to alight, but generally ordered a rummer of hot spirits and water, and then forthwith composed himself to sleep again. This was intolerably dull for Robina, so long accustomed to all the anxious watchfulness, the sweet anxiety, of a love that partook of idolatry.

Used as she had of late been to have every fancy gratified, every whim attended to, and every wish anticipated—to find her every look admired, her every word listened to, with tender deference—the entire neglect, the savage-looking slumber of Sir Grigor, whose shaggy brows seemed to meet over his closed eyes, and his wearing and monotonous snore, irritated her beyond endurance. Tears, half of passion against her father, half of regret for her lover, forced themselves into her eyes. She began too to grow hungry, positively hungry, and to feel extremely indignant that her father, who never forgot to order a hot potation for himself, never seemed to remember that her usual breakfast hour was long past, and that she was

growing positively faint and ill from fasting. True, he had more than once gruffly handed her his glass of hot spirits and water ; but the very smell of it was sickening to her, and without any comment on her refusal, he had eagerly drained the goblet himself.

Now rose on Memory's tearful gaze the thousand little cares and attentions of poor Luxmore—the anxiety with which, in any little jaunt with herself and Miss McPradie, he would arrange for her perfect comfort and repose the swelling pillows of his softly cushioned carriage. With what devoted care would he wrap the softest shawls around her, and place cushions under her feet. How she regretted now the exquisite bouquet he had ever ready for her, the fan, the perfumes, the enticing fruit, the sparkling confectionery, the pretty variety of *bon-bons*, with their amusing mottoes! How, if conversation flagged, he would bring forth some amusing story or laughable caricature. How if her cheek was pale, he deoted

on its pallor—if flushed, how he praised its roses! How every attitude enchanted—every languid or sportive glance enthralled him! What would be his feelings, could he see her now—cold, wan, comfortless, jolted along in a wretched old carriage of a past century, watching, through ever welling tears, the rain beat against the windows, a surly father snoring within, a dreary prospect without—her head, her eyes, her limbs, all aching; and days of this misery before her, and at its close perhaps a worse fate still.

Lord Byron says, “shut up a woman with a looking-glass and plenty of sugar plums, and she will be quiet;” and *Robina* was just the sort of woman to whom the sarcasm applies. A looking-glass and a box of sweetmeats would have quieted her for a time. The glass would have warned her not to spoil her eyes, and set her dreaming of conquests past and to come; and the sugar plums, while they lasted, might have helped to console. But she had no

such appliances; and after some hours of silent endurance, finding the carriage stop to change horses at a large comfortable-looking inn in a populous town, Robina took courage, and exclaimed, when her father growlingly awoke:—

“Papa! I am very faint—I must have some refreshment.”

“Hollo!” said Sir Grigor, “ho! ho! ho! faint indeed! you mean you’re hungry, ‘Bee-nie,’ and as for ‘refreshment,’ it’s a good solid breakfast you’re after, lassie. I thought you could live upon luv—come, I’m glod you’ve found your tongue, and have an appetite for common fare; I foncied you sentimental boarding-school misses were far above the vulgarity of being hungry; but come alang, lassie, we’ll e’en alight and see what our hostess has to offer us! Ho! ho! ho! hungry indeed! I’m glod o’ it—starving brings mony to their senses—ho! ho! ho!”

Robina, not a little nettled at this open ridicule, still thought it best not to resent it, but

followed, weary, cold, and exhausted, in the wake of her voluminous and somewhat pompous papa, whose loud voice and authoritative manner persuaded the fat Landlady, the little Landlord, Waiters, Chambermaids, and even Boots, that he was some very great personage indeed ! The result of which was, that Robina soon found herself in the best Inn's best room, before a blazing fire, and beside a table on which an excellent breakfast was soon spread.

When alone with Sir Grigor, Robina meekly asked if she might ring for a chambermaid to show her to a room, where she might refresh herself by laying aside her travelling wraps, and washing her hands.

"I've na objection, Beenie," said Sir Grigor, "on condeetions ; and indeed I'll e'en do the same mysel. But noo listen, what you mak me, you'll find me. I doot na' yer head's fu' o' romance, and ye think to mak a confidante o' every prying wench you come anent, I gie ye fu' liberty to do wha' ye like, and gang where

ye like, within reason, if ye'll gie me yer word, as Mc.Grigor's dochter, na' to abuse it—na' to be sending aff ony luve nonsense or billet-doux to the fellow Luxmore—and na' to be lukiing after ony other idling flauntering callant, in a red coat or a blue ane. Inns are always fu' o' them. If yer discreet, and keep your ain counsel, and act like Mc.Grigor's sole dochter and sole heiress, there's naething I can do to pleasure ye that I'll think too hard ; but if ye fa' into the follies I spake o', I'll never troost you oot o' my sight—I'll lock yer door, follow you like yer shadow, and tache you what it is to aroose the anger and suspicion o' the Mc. Grigor. Noo, what's yer wul, and what's your way ?”

Robina pondered a moment, then coming fondly up to her father, she said cheerfully: “ My will and my way, dearest papa, are yours; I give you my word, that I will do none of the silly things you reprobate; I accepted Mr. Luxmore under the impression I received from

Miss Mc.Prudie, that he was of all men the one any father, but particularly mine, would covet for his child. At your command I have resigned him, and placed myself at your disposal; surely I deserve no censure for the past, no distrust for the future; leave me to my own heart, it will never suggest any action unworthy of the last scion of the house of Mc.Grigor!"

"There spoke my own darling," said the father, clasping her to his heart; "noo gang where ye wul and do what you wul—and be sure that I've na' corried ye awa' fra' the little crumpled, limping Southron, without a fair excuse, in the person o' ain of the finest, noblest, canniest fellows even the Heeghlands ever produced. Gang and doff your heavy cloak and hat, Beenie, and we'll e'en mak a breakfast that'll mak the Southron waiters stare."

Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor of Grigor was as good as his word. The Southron waiters did indeed stare at the quantities of delicate English fare

which found their way into his rapacious Scottish maw. Basons of tea and coffee—piles of buttered toast, muffins, and crumpets, and several eggs, formed the mere finishing off of a repast, consisting of a large share of an old English round of beef, and a ham, which coming in round, rosy, and blooming, went out a mere wreck. Robina was amazed, but had tact enough to conceal a degree of astonishment bordering on disgust. After an excellent breakfast, she, while awaiting the finale of her father's prolonged repast, threw herself on a sofa near a fire, which a damp though summer morning made very acceptable, and fell into a sound sweet sleep, from which she was awakened by a row between her father, the landlady, and the waiter, about the payment of the bill.

“Gang yer ways, woman!” he said, “gang yer ways, if there's aught to settle, send me the gude mon—he'll hear reason, which na woman ever did fra' Eve doonwards!”

"My husband has nothing to do with the matter, sir," said the landlady, "he leaves all these things to me."

"The bigger fule he then," said Sir Grigor ; "but it motters naething. Breakfast for twa, at twa and a bawbie a head, and if ye had ten hoosbands I'd pay na mair, forbye twa-pence for the waiter, which is hondsom." And he drew the ham near him to cut another slice.

The landlady darted at it.

"No, indeed, sir, since you're no gentleman, and refuse to pay for what you eat, you'll eat no more in this house, I can tell you."

"Aweel, aweel, woman, I'm sotisfied ; I've hod eneugh, and eneugh is as gude as a feast."

"Enough indeed !" said the woman, "you've had enough for a dozen, you great, gluttonous, greedy, cheating Scotch pig you !" And she began to sob, as she looked at the ham, and with another sob to examine the beef ! I can never send them up again. I wonder what the gentlemen as lunches here would say to see 'em !"

“ Tell them they’ve had the honour of being sacrificed to Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor o’ Grigor,” said the provoking old Scotchman ; “ they’ll be e’en prood to come in for my lavings !”

“ Will they—indeed they’re real gentry, and scorn to eat more than they pay for ! I only wish my husband was half a man instead of being the mean, cowardly milksop of a coddle he is !”

“ I wish he were, my good woman, for then he’d teach you with a good horsewhip to breedle yer saucy tongue.”

“ He teach me !” shrieked the woman, fairly enraged, “ neither he nor the best man that ever wore a head, could ever teach me.”

“ I believe you, good woman, you’re ower auld to learn. And noo tak yersel off ! before you provoke me to do what na Mc.Grigor yet ever did, to lay honds on a woman, save in the way o’ kindness. Had I been a poor consumptive dying bodie, hardly able to monage

a coop a tay and a bite o' bread, would ye na' hae charged me twa and seexpence?"

"Of course, that's the regular price."

"And yet such an ain could na' eat the cost o' a penny. Ain pays for the other; my lassie eats like a wee birdie—I, like a Heeghlond gentleman; I groodge na' half-a-croon for her bit and sup, and if I mak a hearty meal ye need na' groodge it me! It's a' fair and square—and if it were na', it's na' Sir Grigor Mc. Grigor o' Grigor would offer it. Stand awa'—gang yer ways—come, Beenie."

Off flounced the landlady in the vain hope of rousing up her little mate, to resist the Scotch cormorant's departure; but he, who had had a glimpse of the huge dimensions, and resolute air, of Sir Grigor, had at the first rumour of a row between his guest and his wife, slunk away and hidden in the coal-hole.

"Waiter! sir!" said a pert fellow, armed with a napkin, as (with Robina on his arm) Sir Grigor stalked down stairs.

Sir Grigor tendered him two-pence.

"Waiter, sir!" repeated the man, holding out his hand with the two-pence in it.

Sir Grigor took them back.

"If they're na use to you, mon, they are to me."

"Waiter, sir!" persisted the man, following.

"Boots, sir!" cried a black-faced, saucy fellow.

"Ostler, sir!" cried another.

"Please to remember the chamber-maid, Mem!" said a gay, coquettish damsel, with pink ribbons in a smart cap.

Robina had no money. She blushed, and tears of shame started to her eyes, as all these noisy applicants, with the enraged landlady bringing up the rear, followed with their clamorous demands to the entrance.

There stood the carriage, but no horses were put to it.

"Are there no horses ready?" growled Sir Grigor.

"We've no horses for them as 'ont pay," said the landlady, while all her household burst into a loud insulting laugh.

"Bide a wee, bide a wee by the door, my luvie!" said the old Scotchman; and leaving Robina on a bench at the door of the 'King's Head,' he stalked pompously into the opposite inn, the 'Rising Sun.'

Poor Robina! how, with the sensitive feelings of early girlhood, she writhed at the gibes and jeers of the little inimical mob now increased by several helpers and idle boys. How different this exit, to that she used to make with Miss Mc.Prudie and the generous and enamoured Luxmore, from any of the hotels or public places she had visited with them—Luxmore, who in the pride and ecstasy of his heart, lavished tokens of approbation on all who had been able for a few moments to contribute to Robina's comfort. How different the deep reverential curtsies of the landladies he had recompensed—the officious gratitude of waiters

and chamber-maids—the wild delight of ‘Boots’—and the well-satisfied nod of that fast and inevitable torment ‘the Ostler’—to all this abusive mockery! these insulting comments! their gibes and jeers, not merely at her father and herself, but at the whole “Land o’ cates and Brither Scots.”

She had never paused to inquire why every lip smiled, and every knee bent, as she leaned on Luxmore’s arm and stepped into his carriage; she had indulged a general notion that it was a tribute paid to her surpassing elegance and beauty. She thought herself fit to be an idol, and marvelled not at any homage proffered to her! Little did she then think that obsequious smile was bought—each humble curtsy, grovelling bow, and officious attention, owing not to her merit, but to her lover’s wealth!

However, she is undeceived now, and rudely too. She is the same Robina—the same face, the same form, the same mien and manner,

even the same hat and cloak in which she had been treated like an empress, and now finds herself scouted and ridiculed like a beggar or an outcast. Even her person and her dress are loudly ridiculed; her long auburn ringlets are pronounced by turns red and sandy, and a pert boy presumes to ask her how she sells her carrots.

Under these circumstances, Luxmore rose higher and higher in her esteem. She herself scarcely knew how little of any love but the grovelling love of self, was mingled with her now bitter regret of one who had made every scene of life one of delight and triumph, and every hour a rapid hour of enjoyment. It was a great relief to her to see, at length, her father, attended by a bowing landlord, issue from the "Rising Sun," followed by an ostler and a pair of post horses.

They were harnessed to Sir Grigor's old carriage among the shouts and derisive ejaculations of the establishment of the "King's

Head." At length the chaise was ready, and Robina, to her unspeakable relief, found herself borne rapidly away from the yells and shouts of her persecutors.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUED.

The scene we have just recorded made a deep and vivid impression on Robina's mind. Wealth and Liberality became in her opinion the noblest and loveliest of attributes. She could not cordially join in her father's exultation at what he considered a signal triumph; and when in the pride of his heart he exclaimed, "Oh, hoo Davie would hae enjoyed this—oh, hoo I wish Davie had but been with us—hoo he'll laugh and glory to think hoo I've dune the rascals"—Robina felt at her heart an omi-

nous dread, that this Davie was no other than Sir Davie Mc.Dougal, mentioned with such praise as her approved suitor in her mother's letter, and to whom in all probability her father alluded, when he spoke of the great and excellent match he had in view for her.

Anxious to be certain on so very important a point, Robina at length ventured to ask: "And pray, papa, who may this Davie be you're so fond of, and always so wishing for?"

"Ha, lassie!" replied her father, pinching her cheek, "dinna ye ken? this same Davie is ain ye'll sune be fonder o' than even I am, and wush niver to be parted fra' mair, night or day, I'm thinking, lassie! It's na mair nor na less than Sir Davie Mc.Dougal o' Dougal and Glen-lonely, the brawest mon and noblest creetur that ever wore a tartan! Sax feet sax he stonds in his shoon! and his shouthers are braid to motch, and a' his leembs proportionate. As ye ken we're na' jist sae wealthy as we hae been, and I'd e'en be saving for your sake,

lassie, I've let 'Grigor,' the auld castle, the muirs and a', to a Southron Airl, and we jist live at Davie's auld place 'Glenlonely,' the groonds o' which tooch the braes of his ain Ha', ca'd, as ye ken, Mc.Dougal Costle! Oh, it's when ye hae seen Davie, the braw lod, ye'll indeed think wi' scorn o' the wee, croompel'd, limping bodie, the auld maid M^c.Prudie had feex'd on for your hoosband! The auld fule—wha' can she ken aboot the motter! And though Davie's weel to do, and Mc.Dougal is his, and Glenlonely, and miles o' muirs and woods, he's nae Southron fule to live up to his incomings; he kens the value o' miller, and the weesdom a laying bye for a rainy day—and a rainy day it is when ilka year brings a bonny wean to be proveded for, lassie. Oh, wait a wee—wait a wee—ye ken na' what a fine mon is, lassie, yet; but ye'll ken when ance ye've clopp'd eyes on Sir Davie Mc.Dougal o' Dougal!"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SURPRISE.

After Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor of Grigor had completed his eloquent tribute to the merits of Sir Davie Mc.Dougal of Dougal, he drew his 'pocket pistol' from an ample pocket, took a long deep draught of rum, pulled his night-cap over his brows, and tied his red silk handkerchief under his chin, wrapped his ample plaid around him, and turning his back to Robina, composed himself at once to sleep—the words "Bide a wee," and "Oh, he's the braw callant, and the carefu'!" dying on his lips. But the

picture he had conjured up was far from being agreeable to Robina's youthful fancy. It was many years since she had seen this paragon, and Memory had left but a faint picture on her mind of his face and form—but what she could recal was far from agreeable to her taste, and she distinctly remembered that as a child there were few of her father's visitors so terrible or so hateful to her as the young Laird of Mc. Dougal Castle.

Memory certainly is often a magnifier, as we all find, when we revisit the haunts and the friends of our childhood, every person and every place seems smaller and meaner than we had pictured them to ourselves; but unless this delusive power did indeed greatly exaggerate, Robina felt sure that the proportions of Sir Davie were those of a giant. She recalled the huge outline of a face and head, certainly handsome, but quite mask-like in the size of its features. She felt almost sure that a quantity of bright red hair rose, in spiral ringlets, standing the

length of half a foot on end from a high tho' freckled forehead—that thick red eye-brows almost met over his eyes, and a huge frill of carett's whiskers surrounded his face. Except this, and a hand which might have served the hugest of the sons of Anak, with a foot to match, Robina could recall nothing, but that Sir David had ever delighted in holding her, against her will, on his gigantic knee, and that a sense of discomfort and alarm were mixed up with him, in her mind!

Then, too, her mother's eulogy and her father's tribute, did not dispose her in his favour; his premature fits of gout, his consequent retirement from the gaieties of Edinburgh, to seclude himself and a young wife, of whom he evidently wished to make a drudge and a nurse—his economy and his maiden sisters—all conspired to raise in Robina's mind a distaste of him, and a most flattering retrospect of poor Luxmore.

She preferred a husband who could be lavish

where she was concerned, and wisely concluded that a man so admired for his own beauty, as Sir Davie, would not pay to her's the homage and the idolatry she had been accustomed to from the somewhat deformed, but yet most interesting Luxmore.

Every hour increased her regret for the man who had so idolized, so pampered, so spoilt her. True, she was now on good terms with her father, they travelled smoothly on together, and she had nothing to complain of; but he exacted, of course, much more attention than he paid; he considered himself and his own convenience first in everything. Any praise he bestowed, was bestowed on Sir Davie or on himself, and more than half the time he spent in sleep! Of course all this was very trying to one who had been so long the sole idol of a man of surpassing delicacy of sentiment, and tenderness of heart—a man, whose own romantic fancy invested the beautiful Robina with every virtue, talent, and graceful attribute, in keeping with a face so fair and a form so perfect—a man

whose wealth brought everything she could covet within her reach, and who, exacting from a young (and as he thought a timid) girl no daring or marked tokens of affection, asked only to be allowed to worship her and to be permitted to believe that he was loved!

Often as the softening hour of twilight stole, with its irresistible influence, even over Robina's worldly heart, during this protracted and tedious journey, she would lean back in the carriage, and tears of a soft, though perhaps too selfish, regret would mingle with the thought of Luxmore.

It was after about a week of the slow travelling and bad roads of former days, that Sir Grigor and his daughter arrived, on a lovely summer evening, at the pretty and romantic town of A——; there they intended to rest for the night. Robina's heart was more than usually sad as she drew near the Borders; they seemed to form a boundary between her past and her future life. Eng-

land, comfort, wealth, indulgence, adoration, and Luxmore, on one side; on the other, a resolute father, a stern mother, discomfort, parsimony, toil, (for she had not forgotten the set of shirts and the household cares) and a lover whom she detested beforehand.

Poor Robina! as the carriage passed under the dark old archway, and through the gates of the town, they seemed, like Dante's, to shut out Hope. A very cordial reception at a very comfortable Inn somewhat revived her, and the sight of a travelling carriage standing in the Inn-yard, which she felt sure was Mr. Luxmore's, sent the colour to her cheek and a wild flutter to her heart. She, however, concealed her emotion, and it was not till she went upstairs to change her dress for dinner, that she ventured to inquire of the chambermaid to whom that carriage belonged.

She heard in reply, that a gentleman, who seemed very ill, and who had evidently been travelling day and night for some time, had

arrived in it, the day before, but so exhausted and fatigued that he had been in bed almost ever since. "He's now just risen," added the girl, "and going to dinner, but he's so pale and spirit-like, that when I took him his hot water, he quite gave me a turn."

An impatient message from Sir Grigor Mc. Grigor sent Robina hastily to the dining-room, where she found her father had already helped himself to soup. Robina sat nervous, abstracted, and starting at every sound, during dinner; never had a repast seemed to her so protracted; she was ready to weep with impatience as her father helped himself again and again to some tempting dish.

Every sound of carriage-wheels seemed to her to announce the departure of Luxmore. At length, the dinner done, the wine and dessert kept Sir Grigor awake for another hour. At last he threw himself on the sofa, and with unspeakable joy Robina saw him close his eyes, and heard him breathe hard. She was resolved

to venture out to walk in the garden, which spread (as she had ascertained) under the windows of Mr. Luxmore's sitting-room; and should he not see her, she determined to send him by the chambermaid a note, to tell him to join her in the garden.

Gently she rose, and stole on tiptoe to the door! Alas! alas! the noise she made in opening it, aroused Sir Grigor.

"Don't go, Beenie," he said; "come and sit by me—I want you here."

Robina was obliged to return; it was long before she thought it safe to move again; at length Despair gave her courage, she walked out of the room, and sped like a frightened doe into the garden.

At that very moment Luxmore, pale and ill, stood at his open window, watching the sunset. His generous and devoted heart was full of Robina; he repeated to himself every word the unhappy Eva Morris, in her earnest wish to comfort him, had said of the sufferings of

his affianced one, her struggles between love and duty, her alternate fits of vivid anguish and passive despair !

“ Angelic, devoted, idolized Robina ! ” trembled on his lips, “ oh that I could see thee again ! come to me, beloved one ! ”

At that very moment, as if in answer to his invocation, a slight rustling was heard, as of some light form passing hastily by the shrubs beneath his window. An ambrosial odour of violets, the scent the young coquette habitually wore, stole upon his senses. Almost sick with sudden ecstasy, he looked from the window, and beheld the slight form of the young girl, robed in white, and the Mc.Grigor tartan thrown over her head and shoulders, flitting along the centre walk of the hotel gardens.

He gazed transfixed for a moment—it must be Robina—he recognised her every movement ; he will follow her, but oh the anguish, should it not be his darling. At this moment, marvelling that he came not, Robina turned

her head; he beheld that haunting face, the laughing eyes, the parted rosy lips, the golden locks bright in the setting sun; he rushed out of his room. Robina turned into a sequestered path, at the end of which was a summer-house; laughingly, and beckoning him with her fair hand the while, she sped along, till she had gained this shelter. Luxmore followed her, wild with joy and hope, and while Robina threw herself on a seat in the summer-house, Luxmore fell on his knees before her.

In broken accents, true love told its monotonous, tautological tale of real suffering—in eloquent and touching language, well counterfeited passion poured forth its bewitching response. The lover's tears fell down his pale cheeks, wan with vigils; the maiden hid her face in her handkerchief and seemed to weep. The conference lasted for an hour, during which time Robina painted in vivid colours all she had endured and must yet endure, and starting at every step, conveyed to

Luxmore's mind the conviction how much she ~~must~~ love him, to risk the wrath of her dreadful father, thus to meet him. He would fain have carried her off, from that very spot, to Gretna Green ; but Robina, the unreal and the heartless, had no wish so speedily to end this, to her, exciting romance. She pleaded delicacy, duty, maiden scruples, with words, looks, and tones that made her, if possible, dearer in her refusal than she would have been in her compliance.

All that Luxmore could obtain from her was, a promise to see him at Glenlonely at a month from that time—which period she stipulated for, as necessary to enable her to prepare her parents' minds for her rejection of the suitor of their choice, and her introduction of the one of her own.

"Do not urge me to more than this, dearest!" she said ; "you little dream what I entail upon myself even by this. It is no trifle for a daughter with my affections, and my sense of

duty, so to disappoint in their dearest wishes, those who love me so well, though with a mistaken tenderness; I must have time to appear to give their chosen one a fair chance!"

"And, oh, if he should please you, Robina! You say he is young, handsome, highly-born, admired, accomplished—alas! alas! what am I in the scale with such a lover?"

"You are loved, dear Arthur, and the 'loved are lovely'—and besides, my love, my first love, have you not my promise? (conditional though, remember) for one month you must leave me to myself, and then come to Glenlonely, and trust the rest to me! And now, oh heaven, hasten away! do, dear, dear Arthur—I hear steps—I hear my father's voice! Were he to discover this meeting, I should not be safe even from personal violence—go at once; and it is not impossible that I may contrive before the end of this sad, sad month, to send you a few lines to tell you I love you still! But now, in pity, go, for here comes my father!"

Madly Luxmore clasped the cold coquette to his warm trusting heart, and then hearing indeed footsteps and voices close by, he sprang through the window of the summer-house, and darted into the shrubbery.

When Sir Grigor (for it was indeed he) entered the summer-house, he found the sly Robina apparently asleep. His loud "Ho! ho! ho!" aroused her. She pretended to start, rubbed her eyes, and asked in true heroine style, "Where am I?"

Sir Grigor replied by shaking her rudely but playfully. "Where are you indeed! why where you ought not to be—forsaking me for earwigs and black beetles—catching cold and losing your time. However, I'm glad it's no worse; when I heard you'd been here an hour, I began to fear you'd found something more to amuse you than the moon and the snails! Come along, and make my tea—we're off at six for bonnie Scotland, and I hope this

is the last I shall see of the South, or the South of me."

Robina followed her father in silence; once she ventured to look towards the shrubbery into which Luxmore had hurried. There, half hidden by a shrub, she saw in the gloaming his slight frail form; passionately he kissed his hand, and furtively Robina returned the adieu. A moment more and she was seated at the well-covered tea-table, supplying her insatiate papa with frequent basons of the beverage "that cheers but not inebriates," and watching with surprise the quantity of muffins, girdle cake, short bread, buttered toast, honey and marmalade, with which he made up his repast. In the meantime, poor Luxmore, full of hope, though faint with love and rapture, had thrown himself on his bed, to dream of his false idol, and to pine out his noble trusting heart in longings for Robina, Glenlonely, and the end of the, to him, terrible month of Absence and Suspense.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ARRIVAL.

After this romantic meeting with her lover, nothing of importance occurred to Robina, until at the end of a tedious, fatiguing, and hilly journey, they arrived at the gates of Glenlonely.

Sir Grigor was by no means in his best humour, for at the nearest village where they had stopped to bait, he had evidently expected to meet Sir Davie Mc.Dougal. It would have been but a proper attention to his future father-in-law and his intended bride, had he taken so much trouble to welcome them, particularly as

Sir Grigor, to make sure of his doing so, had given him timely notice of their approach. Robina saw something was wrong, by the angry flush which rose to her father's brow, as he read a very ill-folded, ill-written letter, with a huge seal, which was handed to him by the hostess of the little Inn. "There, read that," he said, pushing it angrily to Robina, "and see if that's a mon ye can treefle wi'; ye'll need a' your wit and a' yer beauty too, lassie, to bring him to mak you Leddy Mc.Dougal."

Robina read.

Mc.Dougal Castle.

Dear Sir Grigor,

Mony thanks for your teemely notice o' the approach o' yoursel and your bonnie lassie. I fully meant to hae met you at Muirhouse, but it's so fine a day for fly fishing, and I feel so uncommon weel, that I must e'en get a day's sport; mair especially as Rob Douglas and Tam Frazer are come to Mc. Dougal to hae a day's fishing wid me.

The fine weather and these fine fellows may flee away, but yoursel and the bonnie Beenie are, I tak it, *stashedunerry*. Hoping sune to pay my respects at Glenlonely, I am, dear Sir Grigor,

Yours truly,

DOUGAL Mc.DOU GAL o' DOUGAL.

Tears of wounded pride at being made thus light of, and treated thus cavalierly by this untutored Scottish laird, filled Robina's eyes. And her cheeks burned as she contrasted this impertinent and illiterate excuse, with the elegant and deep devotion of Luxmore's letters, the anguish they breathed when any unlucky and inevitable chance kept him from her, or compelled him in any way to disappoint her in any expected arrangement. "Rob Douglas," and "Tam Frazer," and "a day's fishing!" to be put in competition with, and preferred to *her*! Silently in her heart she registered a vow that he should suffer for this; and an

ardent desire to captivate merely that she might scorn and reject him, succeeded in her mind to the indifference with which she had hitherto looked forward to meeting him.

"He taks it a' coolly eno' ye see, lassie ; but the callant kens his ain worth, and a' the women in Edinbro' hae conspeered to spoil him !"

"I dare say I shall be able to bring him to reason, papa !" said Robina, with a toss of conscious beauty ; "he'll na' find this cavalier behaviour will do with a young lady bred in the South."

"Weel, lassie, gang yer ain gait wi' him ; if ye can mak him mair what I was when I coorted your mother, I'll be glad to see it, but dinna gang too far neither. Dinna for the warld offend him. My hail heart is set on his morrying you, and thot sune. Ye can never ken how mair than a motter o' life and death it is to me and your mither to see you Leddy Mc.Dougal. If ye can mak him sue ye as he ought to sue Mc.Grigor's dochter, it's weel ;

but if na', ye must e'en put up wi' his airs till you're morried to him, for if ye dinna wed him, I'll lave ye naething but my curse."

"Never fear, papa!" said the confident beauty; "if I do not wed him, it will not be for want of his wishing it."

"And canna be for want o' your ain consent, lassie! Ye'll na' daur to treeble wid Mc.Grigor on the soobject next his heart, and on whilk a' depends—na, na, ye're na fule—bring him to your feet and weelcome, I'll joy to see him there, but ken when to raise him, and be the comfort and preed o' my life, and the darlin' o' my heart. And noo here we are at Glenlonely. It's na' the bonnie lightsome place Mc.Grigor Hall was, but it's a grond hoose for a' that, and ye can walk mony miles and na' leave the estate."

CHAPTER XXIII.

GLENLONELY.

Poor Robina did not feel much exhilarated by her father's last remark ; the gloomy aspect of the house and grounds made her wish that a few steps would take her out of its dreary precincts. It was no comfort to her to hear that for miles around she would find herself still on the Glenlonely estate.

The House which was at the end of a very long avenue of Scotch firs and pines, was a large, gloomy, irregular building, the different styles of which proved that it had been fre-

quently added to at different epochs. It seemed out of repair, and the stucco with which it was covered had in many places as it were peeled off, while from each long narrow window, streams of greenish slime seemed to have fallen, leaving stains which to Robina looked like tears of desolation, falling from the eyes of the building over its worn and haggard cheeks. The long avenue was very dark, and the road grass-grown and miserably kept—there was nothing of the finish and exquisite neatness Robina had remarked in the country places she had visited in the South. As they drove up to the house, no gorgeous coachman, active groom, or dashing footman, appeared to welcome them; far less the regiment of servants drawn up in the hall, which Robina had delighted in, in Luxmore's establishments, and had expected to find at her father's.

After a time, a country fellow, with a livery coat, hastily thrown over a gardening dress, appeared, pulled his forelock and darted off

again, muttering something about, "My Leddy, and my Leddy's ain mon."

After much delay, and on the part of Sir Grigor, many curses not loud but deep, the same fellow re-appeared, and in language Robina could scarcely understand, said that his Leddy, and his Leddy's footman, were baeth dressing, and with much zeal and some address he, Geordie, helped to unpack the carriage and to usher them into the house.

Robina was not warm-hearted; she was not even as affectionate as most girls reared away from home; but even she felt hurt, when instead of her mother rushing to meet the child, her only child, whom she had not seen for so many years—Lady Mc. Grigor's own woman, Mrs. Becky Mc.Muir, the primmest of elderly maidens came down to say that "her Leddyship was at her toilet—that she hoped Sir Grigor and Miss Mc.Grigor were na' over fatigued by their lang journey—that dinner would be ready preceesely at sax, and that if

they would mak their toilets at once, her Ledyship would meet them in the drawing-room in an hour's time!"

Poor Robina! her eyes filled with tears, (she had felt some natural yearnings, chilled as her heart had early been) for her mother's kiss. She had ever looked forward with some interest to seeing this same Mistress Becky Mc.Muir, the tyrant of her childhood it is true, but who, seen through memory's softening haze, had excited some emotion in her heart; but this prim reception from the maid, and this dull formal message from the mother sent back all her tenderness on her heart again—there it seemed to curdle and to turn to gall—and after turning away for a moment to drive back a tear, she coldly returned her mother's compliments, and expressed her willingness to repair at once to her toilet.

"Her Ledyship and mysel had hoped, Miss," said Mrs. Beckie, "that you would hae brought a maid wi' ye fra' the South."

"Pahaw!" muttered Sir Grigor, "is na' ane tire-woman enoo' in these quiet parts?"

"It's an imposseebeelity, Sir Grigor, that I can tak mair on my honds than my Liddy hersel—indeed wi' altering, toorning, making, pricking, pointing, plaiting, dressing her Liddyship's head, and getting up her fine linen, forbye sundries, as, dying ribbons, cleaning blondes and laces, and seeing after a' things, I've mair than I can weel manage!"

"Oh, I require very little help," said Robina; "any one of the maids can do what I want."

"I remarked to her Liddyship, Miss, that young leddies in the present day, at boarding schules, were taught to wait on themsels a good deal—and ther's Geordie's sister is up to-day to see whether she'll suit you. The lassie's handy enoo, if ye dinna let her tongue run."

"She will do very well; will you send her hae? and let her show me to my room, and let Geordie help her to take in my boxes."

“ Well, Beenje, I shall see you at dinner—I shall e’en gang and tak a speer into the stable,” said Sir Grigor.

“ And I’ll gang and fetch Shoozie, (Geordie’s sister) and instal her at ance into her new office,” said the pompous Mistress Beckie Mc. Muir, delighted at so entirely removing from her august self, all fatigues and anxieties connected with waiting on our young coquette. Nor was Robina sorry to secure a young attendant, in lieu of the starched, grumbling, and grudging old damsel, whose tyrannical attendance on her person in her childhood, was fraught with the recollection of torturing tugging at her hair, tight lacing, against which there was no appeal, bitter reproofs, and dignified reserve.

When Robina was alone she looked somewhat anxiously into the dim oval glass, with its gorgeously carved frame of white wood, to ascertain how she actually looked, for she was much piqued that no single expression of surprise or admiration at her growth and the

development of her charms had escaped the prim blue lips of Mistress Beckie Mc.Muir.

The result was most satisfactory; slightly flushed with the excitement of her recent resentment against her tardy lover Sir Davie, her eyes sparkling with pride, and glittering with the lingering moisture of wounded sensibility at her mother's coldness; her hair in beautiful disorder; the picture the mirror gave her back was fair enough to put her in the highest good-humour with herself, and consequently with all around her.

She received the raw-boned, staring, gaping Shoozie, in spite of her towering white muslin cap, her bushy red hair, freckled face, bare arms, and broad Scotch, with an engaging gentleness, which at once secured the warm regard of the unsophisticated child of nature.

"I'll just show you to your room, Miss Mc. Grigor," said Mrs. Beckie, "and then I must repair to my Leddy, who'll be a' anxiety to hear some account——"

Robina's heart beat—doubtless of herself! she thought.

“O’ a box o’ millinery Sir Grigor was to hae brought fra’ the Sooth, and seems quite to hae forgotten!”

Robina hurried on; after many corridors, winding stairs, and single steps, she came to a large and gloomy room. It looked out on a plantation of Scotch firs, and was darkened by the propinquity of many of them to the windows. The bed was hung with faded old curtains of brown damask, with window hangings to match. Some stiff high-backed chairs were ranged against the wall, prim and comfortless as Miss Beckie herself. A dingy toilet glass stood on the solitary table, and several grim old ancestors of the Dougal family, in oval frames, scowled from the walls. A huge black-looking chimney place was covered by an ugly board, and gloom and discomfort seemed to have taken up their abode in the room. Not one particle of taste, lightness, comfort, care,

or ornament, had been bestowed on the bower of this only child, returning home after so long an absence ; and Robina's first impulse was to sit down and weep ; her next was to quit this odious spot, where no one seemed to care for her, as soon as possible, for the warm and sunny South, Luxmore's elegant and fairy home, and his devoted love. And in the meantime, to arouse herself to make this dreary dungeon as cheerful and pleasant as possible ; at any rate there was space—two large windows, and an ample fire-place.

Even now, damp, chill, and dark as it was, how much comfort would a blazing fire of pine logs give to the whole room. Nothing could be easier ; Shoozie thoroughly understood lighting fires, though she knew nothing of dressing ladies. With the help of Geordie, she soon brought up a huge basket of pine logs, and very soon a noble fire threw its cheering light and warmth into every corner of the immense and dingy room ; the unwonted blaze seemed

even to play on the prim lips of some powdered and forbidding looking dames of a past century, and to light up the grim visages of their stiff thin lords.

This great object gained, Robina began to unpack her boxes; and Shoozie's delight and surprise at the new and gay fashions revealed, proved her a true daughter of Vanity and Eve. Shoozie, who knew the house well, soon contrived to bring from some of its many uninhabited rooms, various articles of furniture and comfort Robina needed. An arm-chair, a sofa, a table or two, a footstool, and finally, by Geordie's aid, a few flower pots, some boxes of mignonette, and a vase or two of hardy but welcome flowers. All this, with a white toilet cover, and Robina's knic-knacs tastily arranged, converted the den of Desolation, into a maiden bower of comfort and grace. The evening sun too, which till this hour had been shrouded by mists, suddenly came out red and radiant, as

though to welcome back the last of the Mc. Grigors to the land of her fathers.

Robina threw open her windows, and saw the raindrops bathed in sunlight glittering like gems, and breathed in the freshness of the northern air, blowing, laden with fragrance, from a moor at no great distance.

"Come what will," she thought, "I can make myself happy; even this horrible spot, my tact, taste, and energy have rendered bearable, and the less kindness and affection shown me here, the less compunction I shall have in leaving so drear an abode for the warm South—and the coldest of parents for the most devoted of husbands. And now for the dear delights of the toilette; I think my appearance, when I am dressed, will cause some little surprise even in haughty and cold-hearted mamma. No woman can be quite indifferent to the joy of seeing her child, who left her a mere doll, grown into a first-rate beauty!"

With these vain musings, Robina made her

toilet—a toilet which at that time was the *ne plus ultra* of taste, elegance, and fashion. With eyes and mouth wide open, but with occasional ejaculations of wonder and ecstasy, Shoozie watched her young mistress, giving, after her own officious and clumsy fashion, all the aid she could, and often indeed encumbering her with help.

Robina had only just completed her elaborate toilet when the dinner bell rung—and guided by the enchanted Shoozie, ‘the Beauty’ made her way to the withdrawing room, where, in awful state, sate her mother, the Leddy Grigor Mc.Grigor o’ Grigor!

CHAPTER XXIV.

LEDDY MC.GRIGOR, OR A CI-DEVANT BEAUTY.

At the first glimpse of her mother—an unimpassioned, self-possessed, and a haughty person, but her mother still—Nature triumphed over Art, Affection over Selfishness, Instinct over Habit, and Robina, forgetting herself in every sense, rushed forward, and threw herself weeping into Leddy Mc.Grigor's arms.

Even the stately Leddy felt an unwonted flutter at her heart, a moisture in her eyes, and a flush rise to her noble brow ; but she had been trained in a school, which even more than

Robina's, condemned all evidence of emotion, as plebeian and affected. And so, after calmly returning her child's sobbing and passionate embraces, she put her quietly on a seat beside her, and stepping to the mirror, readjusted her somewhat antique but elaborate head-dress.

"You have spoiled poor Beckie's whole morning's work, my Robina," she said. "I fear I must retire to my dressing-room again; and you, my child! your locks are discomposed, and your eyes are red—go and bathe them, my love!"

"Oh, not yet, not yet, mamma," replied Robina, at whose heart the auld lang syne was busy, and who had a faint and 'sweet remembrance of happy childish innocent days spent by that mother's side—of sweet slumbers on that cold breast—of a thousand minute and almost impalpable cares which even the least tender of mothers must, by the mere force of nature and instinct, bestow on the least loved of children. "My eyes will soon recover, and

my hair is easily arranged; and as to your head-dress, dearest mother, I am sure I can readjust it!"

"I never suffer ony hond but Beckie's to come nigh my head," said the Leddy. "However, I'll e'en ring—she can replace these pins here, before Marmaduke (my ain mon) comes to announce the dinner, and before your father comes in fra the stables. There, ring the bell, Robina, and I'll e'en sit here while you tell me a' about the new fashions o' London, and the pooblic places, and where ye've been and wha' ye've been dooing this while!"

All her fond impulses thus checked, Robina brushed away her tears, resettled her own head-dress, assumed a composure equal to her mother's, and by the time Mistress Beckie reappeared, she was fairly launched in an animated description of hats, caps, and bonnets, waists, skirts, flounces and furbelows, concerts, balls, promenades, theatricals, and fashionable preachers! To all these details the Leddy listened

with a heightening colour, and a kindling eye; and Robina was almost surprised at the great and imposing beauty her mother still retained. Robina, accustomed to the jaded, exhausted, 'wall flowers' of the South, whose daughters, prematurely introduced, drag their unhappy mothers, temporarily propped up by salvolatile and ether, to three or four parties every evening, was astonished to see how a quiet life, early hours, pure air and an impassive nature, could preserve even beyond fifty, the bloom of the cheek, the fire of the eye, and the rounded proportions of the form!

Leddy Mc.Grigor had been a celebrated beauty—the reigning toast of Edinburgh for many years—and like many of our Scotch beauties, she had resolved her reign should be a long one.

She was something more than thirty, but perhaps in the very zenith of her charms—or as De Balzac says, '*La Venus comme on la conçoit dans la trentaine*', that she suddenly

and haughtily accepted the hand of Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor of Grigor, forsook the world before it had forsaken her, and retiring to Mc.Grigor Castle, there began to learn the difficult task of growing old gracefully. This sudden eclipse of one who was still the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, caused much comment; and many explanations of so rare a retreat enlivened the *chronique scandaleuse* of Edinborough. The most accredited was, that a certain noble duke, who during the long illness of his paralytic old Duchess, had been one of the most constant of Miss Robina Hamilton's adorers—so devoted and so ardent that all the world believed he would, if ever free, throw his coronet at her feet—had suddenly, on the demise of his Duchess, married a young girl who had been her Grace's companion—a girl small in stature, meek in manner, silent, reserved, and very shy, as it was supposed, while she was poor 'Annie Lealie'—half friend, half underling of the Duchess of R——, and her Grace's thirtieth

cousin ; but who, it was evident, had found courage to raise her downcast eyes to the Duke of R——, and who as Duchess of R—— suddenly revealed that those eyes, so long veiled by their white lids and black lashes, were large, black, and full of ambition and fire—that that meek tongue could talk with eloquence and more than woman's sense—that little form assume a haughty bearing—and the small shy Annie Leslie, by the mere power of wit, ambition, and cunning, completely overthrow the hopes, and baffle the well-built plans, of the all-accomplished and radiant beauty, Miss Hamilton, who had had the advantage of many years intimacy with his Grace, and certainly had at one time been the object of his passionate admiration.

Whether the sudden announcement of his Grace's marriage with Annie Leslie was the cause of Miss Hamilton's sudden acceptance of Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor, and sudden retirement from the world, we cannot tell ; but it is certain

that she never could hear the Duchess of R—— spoken of without an ill-repressed emotion—that the accounts of her fêtes and her parties were gall and wormwood to the recluse—and that those who knew best how to please and cajole her, were most prone to disparage her successful rival.

“And sae yer ain hair is dressed in the last London fashion, is it, Robina? I canna say I like it, but, if it’s the fashion, we must a’ learn to like it.”

“Oh, it’s the height of the fashion, mamma,” said Robina, “every other style is obsolete. In fact, I’ve taken care to bring none but the newest fashions with me ; and coming from London, I expect to set the mode here, not to follow it, mamma !”

Robina perceived that this assumption was her best device to impose on both the Leddy and her maid.

“Weel, you’re right, Robina,” said her

mother; "and I only hope Sir Davie Mc. Dougal will admire all these new modes—that's the great object now!"

Robina coloured, and said, "I've no doubt he'll admire them only too much to please me!"

"That can hardly be," said her Leddyship coldly, "considering how much both your father and myself covet him for you."

"In that case!" said Robina, "both you and papa must leave him entirely to me—and I think I can promise that I will bring him to my feet; whether I shall deign to raise him thence, I cannot say," she added, with a playful hauteur, which became her well.

Lady Mc.Grigor smiled.

"How much she is like me!" she said to Mrs. Beckie, who, with a prim curtsy, replied:—

"If Miss is half as honsome as you, my Leddy, she'll do weel eno'; but they new

fashions are a great disguise, to my mind ; Miss would look something like, if she had a sma' sprinkling o' pooder in her hair, a bonnie boonch o' curls on her forehead, and a sma' turban to finish her off !" And so saying, Beckie sailed out of the room.

Sir Grigor shortly after came in to dinner, which was announced by her Leddyship's ain mon 'Marmaduke,' an over-fed, pompous, egotistical fellow, in a crimson livery, who though quite out of keeping with the rest of the establishment and its fallen fortunes, the *ci devant* Beauty insisted on keeping, at an enormous salary, and in spite of many airs and much unwillingness even in the fellow himself. But Leddy Mc.Grigor had been born and bred a Beauty—and Vanity and Selfishness are the natural results in such a case. She had been made an idol from her cradle, and could not understand that the convenience or comfort of any other human being could be

of equal importance with her own. **Alas!**
alas! sooner or later the world teaches to all
such beauties, its harshest lessons, in its
harshest manner.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN EVENING AT HOME.

The first evening Robina spent at Glenlonely seemed to the young coquette ineffably dull and interminably long.

Shortly after dinner Sir Grigor and Lady Mc. Grigor betook themselves to the old-fashioned game of picquet, at which they generally spent all their evenings.

"Get your work, Robina, and sit by us," said her mother, speaking to her child, but gazing at herself in an opposite mirror.

"I have no work unpacked, mamma," replied,

the damsel, who knew little of the needle, and had never been accustomed to the drudgery of plain work—"I will get a book!"

"No, no—ring for my work-basket; you will find some handkerchiefs to hem and mark; nothing fidgets me, like people reading beside me."

"I will go to another table."

"Do as your mother wishes, child," said Sir Grigor sternly; "you will find in these parts that it is a much greater recommendation to a girl to be a neat plain worker, than a high-flown romance reader. Sir Davie abominates all literary ladies."

In answer to the bell came her Leddyship's 'ain mon,' who was forthwith dispatched for Mistress Beckie Mc.Muir, and the work-basket.

"To-morrow, Robina!" said Lady Mc.Grigor, "you will be at no loss for occupation; under Beckie's assistance, you will cut out your papa's dozen new fine shirts, the honour of making

which has been reserved for you. You will take inventories of all the linen, plate, glass, china, and preserves—all of which, with the keeping of the family receipt book, will be henceforth entrusted solely to you; not only will it fit you to preside over the larger establishment we hope soon to see you at the head of, but it will relieve Beckie of many duties, her age renders fatiguing, and which she finds she cannot attend to as she ought, while she has the entire charge of my wardrobe, gets up my fine linen, dresses my head, and in fact performs all the duties I require of my lady's maid."

"Ah!" said Sir Grigor, "follow your mother's advice, Beenie, and try in everything to be like her, and then you'll be the envy of your own sex and the admiration of ours."

"I thank you, Sir Grigor," said her Ladyship haughtily, "for a tribute which it were affectation in me to pretend not to deserve."

Robina's proud, vain heart was ready to

burst ; the idol of the wealthy, elegant, devoted Luxmore was to sink at once into the domestic drudge at Glenlonely ; and, worse still, was expected quietly to assume the same despicable character, for life, at Mc. Dougal Castle, there to exchange the tyranny of her father and mother for that of Sir David and his three spinster sisters, who were always to reside with him !

And should it be ? would she tamely submit to a thralldom so odious, so monotonous, so crushing ? No ! no ! not while she had a head to plan, a heart to feel, a mind to resolve—not while Love and Luxmore lived, and while she had a hand to wield a pen, and summon him to her rescue. Her father had urged her to copy her mother in all things ; it was an imprudent counsel, but one Robina was well disposed to follow ; he little knew, while trying by such advice to curry favour with his haughty lady, how closely Robina meant to tread in her mother's steps, and how completely the shrewd girl had fathomed the relative positions and

characters of her parents. Half an hour in their company had convinced her, that in spite of Sir Grigor's violent temper, blustering manner, and overbearing ways, he was dreadfully afraid of his haughty, cold, sarcastic Lady. Madame de Stael cleverly observed, "*C'est par nos défauts que nous gouvernons*"—a mortifying truth, but still a truth. There is so much of the bully in the ordinary run of human beings, and so much of the coward in the bully, that fear is, alas! more powerful than love. How often do we see the meek, enduring, tender, conciliating wife slighted, taunted, reproached, and even raved at, aye for her very virtues and her good deeds, while the haughty, sarcastic, fault-finding, and imperious shrew, rarely meets with a husband bold enough to censure her even for her errors and misdeeds.

Few men like to provoke the sharp retort of a witty and malignant woman, most of them know themselves so vulnerable! but the gentle being, who, however wounded, cannot bear to

wound, in return, what are her tears compared to a vixen's taunts? Sir Grigor would have trampled on a meek and humble wife, but before her Ladyship he cringed; he knew her bitter, cold, sarcastic, ready to attack, and skilled in self-defence, and he wisely took care not to provoke her.

Robina sate the whole evening, her fingers busy with the to her odious work—her head actively engaged in planning her release from this state of thralldom, and devising letters to be addressed to the devoted Luxmore. At length Lady Mc.Grigor, having completely beaten her lord at picquet, and pocketed all his silver, the party broke up. Robina, with weary eyes, and head aching from her unwonted toil, retired to bed; and Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor, having obsequiously lighted his lady's candle, opened the door, rung for her maid, and reverentially kissed her still lovely cheek, repaired at her desire to see that all the doors and shutters

were properly secured, and all fires and candles safe for the night.

It was a great relief to poor Robina to leave the *prim* drawing-room, and chilling presence of her haughty mother, and to find a noble fire and the smiling Shoozie awaiting her in her room.

The girl, in spite of her northern accent and uncouth manners, showed considerable readiness and tact, in learning how to perform all the little offices Robina required, and which the vain and lazy beauty had been accustomed to receive from the adroit and delicate hands of the poor Clothes Teacher, Eva Morris. She betrayed, too, no small daring and cunning, in the way in which, in answer to a question at the door from Sir Grigor, she asserted that fire and candle were safe, and her young lady in bed.

Robina, for form's sake, when her father was out of hearing, reproved her maid for this falsehood—for she was at that moment reading an

old romance she had found in a closet in her room, and was basking before a bright and fragrant fire of pine-wood, and enjoying the luxury of having her long, rich, chesnut hair brushed and knotted up for the night.

“La, Miss!” said Shoozie, “one canna be always telling a mon the exoct truth. If I had na’ said the fire ond leeght wor oot and yersel’ in bed, they’re’d ha’ been a clishmaclaver and a noise fit to wake the dead. Women should niver tell lees to ane anither, as mither says, but there’s na pace wi’ a mon without decaiving him. Father does na’ ken half wha’s dune in our hoose, and wi’ wha’ he does ken, he leads mither a fine life. Mither says men hae got a’ the strength, and a’ the larning, and too aft a’ the siller; but women hae the cunning and the sperit, and sa she’s mair thon a motch for him after a’!”

Shoozie’s philosophy found an echo in Robina’s cunning mind and double-dealing heart; she began to see how useful to her, in the

elopement she had already almost planned, would be the unscrupulous and ready wit of Shoozie. She completely won the maiden's heart by the present of a smart cap and a gaudy shawl, and she retired to her large old-fashioned bed—thoroughly disgusted with the prospect of life at Glenlonely—more so still with that at McDougal Castle; and her last resolves, ere she sunk into the sweet sleep of seventeen, were, to bring Sir Davie to her feet, merely to punish his impertinence, and when she had become essential to the egotist's comfort, if not his happiness, to fly with the enamoured Luxmore to the warm South, and all the dear delights of luxury and wealth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TYRANT-SLAVE.

At a much earlier hour than agreeable to her, Robina was aroused by her father knocking at her door.

"Come, Beenie," he said, "are ye na' stirring yet, lassie?"

"No, papa, it's very early I'm sure—is mamma getting up?"

"Na! na! your mither just taks a cup o' tay in her bed; but I'm waiting for you to gie me my porridge—so be quick—I'll e'en tak a

speer in the stable, and then I'll be bock, and expect you'll be ready, Beenie !”

Cross and sleepy, Robina arose, and made a hasty toilet, which she had hardly completed when Sir Grigor returned for her. She followed him to the breakfast room, where her good-humour was not at all restored by seeing, instead of tea and coffee, which were become quite necessary to her comfort, two large basons of oatmeal porridge, and a plate of bannocks.

Eagerly Sir Grigor began to devour his portion ; Robina tasted hers, and then put it from her.

“ Can I not have tea or coffee ?” she asked.

“ Na, Beenie, thot can ye na'. It's na' sa wholesome as *these*, and it's unco, dear ; yer mither must e'en ha' her tay ilka morn—and between oursels, I think it the cause o' a' her narvous complaints and sic like, besides it's being an extrovogonce I can ill afford. But niver mention it to yer mither—quite between

oursels, there are mony things in whilk her Leddyship is mair wasterfu' than I could wish; but it's mair than my life's worth even to allude to them; 'and a still tongue makes a wise head;' in addeetion to whilk I may add, 'least said's sunest mended.' That's my mottoe wid yer mither; but I sall expect you in ilka way ye can quietly to remedy a' wrangs, and by strict economy in a' departments o' yer ain, to atone for only little extrovogonce in yer mither's personal expenditure. The suner ye mak friends wi' the porridge, Beenie, the better, for na cup o' tay sall ye ever hae to yer breakfast at Glenlonely on the word o' Mc.Grigor, and Mc.Grigor's word is na' leeghtly given, nor leeghtly withdrawn. For mysel, I monoge to mak a gude breakfast on a bason or twa o' these, and may be a tass o' whiskey to wind up wi'. And if ye like, ye maun do the same. My ain mither, the late Leddy Mc.Grigor wha leaved to be a hoondred and twa, and then died fra' a fa' fra' her horse, took ilka morn o'

her lang life, twa basons o' porridge, and ain tass o' whiskey, and wha' my mither did, my dochter sall do, and I only wish I had inflooeence with my wife to mak her do the same !”

Urged by hunger, and seeing the hopelessness of the case, Robina took her porridge ; the whiskey she recoiled from with such disgust, that Sir Grigor forbore to press it ; indeed, as his chief object was economy, in insisting thus on a breakfast so unpalatable to Robina (though habit had made it agreeable to himself,) he was quite content to give up the whiskey. Poor Robina, she had heard so much of the Scotch breakfasts, and had been led to understand that her father was so wealthy a man, she had expected an abundance of every luxury and every comfort. Memory faintly retraced the same repast in her childhood ; she recalled the gorgeous silver service for tea and coffee, the varieties of cakes, pasties, fish, honey, marmalades, confections of every kind—and now, on a not very clean cloth two basons of porridge and a plate

of bannocks ! what could it mean ? Was her father grown a miser, or worse still, was he grown poor ?

Horrible thought ! which many things tended to confirm ; but if so, why so madly refuse the wealthy Luxmore's alliance ? why so constantly remind her during the journey that she was his only heir ?

Robina was bewildered, she could not make it out, she only knew that both Economy and Poverty were equally distasteful to her ; only of the former she thought with disgust—of the latter with terror.

Determined, if possible, to get some clue to these mysteries, and ashamed of the fear of her father which she felt hourly gaining upon her, Robina, assuming the simplicity of a child, said, "Are you very poor, papa, that you are obliged to stint in this manner ?"

She had scarcely uttered the words, before she wished them recalled indeed.

Sir Grigor turned first deadly pale, and then

of the deepest crimson, his eyes seemed to flash fire, and then he could scarcely articulate, as in his fury he foamed and bit his tongue.

"Ye graceless hizzie! wha' Southron insolence is this! Puir indeed! Mc.Grigor puir! Ken ye na' thot the weelthier a mon is, the mair saving he becumes! It's in the Sooth, fule! that people spend a' they hae and mair too—wha' wad mak ye think me puir?"

"Only," faltered Robina, "that you have said two or three times you cannot afford this and that, and you have left Mc.Grigor Ha', and——"

"And wha' mair, ye young deevil?" roared her father, darting at and violently shaking her, "are ye cume hame to spy and to speer, and to taunt and to lie, and to defame yer ain father, and accuse him o' poverty!"

"Poverty is no crime, sir," stammered Robina.

"It is the greatest of crimes, fule! in the eyes of the world, and in my eyes. There,

then, gang yer ways, before I shake a' the breath out o' yer silly bodie; but ken, ance for a', I left Mc.Grigor Ha' because the air o' the place did na' agree with her Leddyship; and when I say I canna afford this and thot, I mean that I canna afford to be wastefu', and yet to gie you the great and noble portion without whilk a dochter o' the hoose o' Mc. Grigor never yet formed an alliance with ony other family. And noo gang and mak yersel' ready to receive Sir Davie Mc.Dougal. In all probabeelity he'll ca' here the morn. But waste na' yer time, Beenie; busk ye, and mak ye bonnie, lassie, and then set aboot some quiet hoosehold wark, that'll be profeetable in itsel' and keep yer mind fra' mischief and vain speerings at wha' ye canna understond!"

Gladly the terrified girl escaped from her proud and passionate father. "Oh," she thought, "could Luxmore know this! Could Luxmore have seen her, his idol, so raved at, so rudely shaken, shaken till she positively

panted for breath—could he behold on her delicate wrists, and her fair shoulders, the cruel marks of her father's deadly gripe—how would his heart bleed for her—how would he rush to her rescue—how would he hover around her home till he had devised some means of bearing her safely from this wretched abode, and of sheltering her in his arms and under his name from every evil and every sorrow.

This last rencontre with her father, to the recollection of which Robina could not recur without a shudder, (so much had his unexpected, inexplicable, and causeless violence startled her) strongly impressed on her mind the necessity of proceeding with the greatest caution, in the, to her, all-important work of her deliverance. It was impossible for her to foresee to what dreadful violence, failure, and detection might not expose her, in an affair so near her father's heart, since an imprudent question, which provoked his irritable temper,

had induced him to lay violent hands on her. A bitter and haunting resentment for a treatment so insulting and so unwarrantable filled Robina's heart, and even while trembling at the dangers she must incur, she looked with a kind of vindictive delight to the moment when her father should discover that his tyrannical scheme had failed, that his victim had outwitted him, that both he and his pompous, egotistical son-in-law elect, were defeated by a school girl, and that she was not only gone, but gone for ever!—that as the wife of Luxmore he had not a shadow of power over her, and that while all the world, she doubted not, would applaud the girl of spirit, who at seventeen could so plan and so execute, his pompous, contemptuous, egotistical choice, Sir David Mc.Dougal, would, as the jilted swain, be the jest of the whole country. Robina having dried her tears, was luxuriating over this prospect, when the angular face of Mistress Beckie

was poked in at her door, and she was summoned to her mother's room.

"Ye'll get the linens, Miss Robina," said the old Abigail, "and the suner ye set to them the better, for Sir Grigor is sadly in want o' them, I can tell you."

In no very good humour, Robina obeyed her mother's summons. The *ci-devant* beauty was in bed, propped up by pillows, wrapped in shawls, and an imposing pile of Brussels lace and muslin in the shape of a night-cap on her finely-shaped head.

The bed was covered with the linen and cambric which were to be converted into the shirts. At the foot of the bed, which was very high and canopied with crimson damask, meekly stood the late infuriate Sir Grigor, officiously milling a cup of chocolate for his august lady, who now and then noticed him so far as to bid him somewhat sharply not lean on the bed, or not let the chocolate get cold, or refrain from this noise or that movement.

On seeing Robina, she said angrily: "Why are you in dishabille, child? You should be drest betimes—there is no knowing at what hour Sir David may think fit to call.

"My luve," said Sir Grigor, "before you fatigue yourself any more, let me beg you to tak a sup o' this chogolad—you o'erexert yersel, indeed you do, my Leddy."

"I am the best judge of that, Sir Grigor," said the lady, haughtily; "if you are weary of holding the cup, e'en give it to Robina."

"I weary, my darling!" said Sir Grigor, "of doing anything for my angel!"

"Weel, then, haud the cup and yer tongue, Sir Grigor, while I speak to Robina. Here are the linens for twelve shirts, and here's the cambric for frills and ruffles—there's the pattern—tak them wi' ye, and meesure them exoctly, and cut them out; but first dress yersel' to the greatest advantage, and then tak yer work-basket and sit ye down in the breakfast room; its mair than probable Sir David

and the Miss Mc.Dougals will ca' the morn, and I'd be glod they'd find ye sae weel employed."

"And what are you going to do, my darling, when you get up?—a drive or a ride would do you good!"

"I've na' just made up my mind," said the Liddy; "but it's possible I'll tak a canter on the mare; but ye need na' fash yersel' about me; my ain mon will attend me, and a' you hae to do, is to ride aff yersel' to the town, and speer about my boxes, that are na' come yet; and I've na mair to say to ye, sae gang baith, and dinna idle your time."

Sir Grigor kissed the fair hand his wife extended for her chocolate; and Robina, catching up the linens, and quite as much disgusted with her father's cringing obsequiousness to her mother, as with his heartless tyranny to herself, hastened to her own room to ponder on her hard and hopeless task, for she had as much idea how to cut out an Eastern Caftan as an

English shirt. However the easier and much more agreeable task of arraying herself for conquest was first to be attended to, and this Robina protracted as long as she could. During its progress she opened her heart about the shirts to the quick and sympathizing Shoozie, and found that rustic but ready-witted damsel fertile in expedients to her young Mistress's credit and labour.

Shoozie, like most Scotch girls of the lower orders, had been well taught at a good school; she could cut out very fairly herself, and do 'white work,' as she called it, very neatly; but added to this, she was intimate with the school-mistress and many of the teachers, and undertook to get all the laborious part of this great work done for a few shillings, which luckily Robina had by her still.

"Ye must e'en hae ane or twa by ye to mak believe wi', Miss," said Shoozie, "and as for cooting oot, I'll do thot in na time."

Thus relieved from a load of terror, work,

and care, Robina, taking in her basket one of the shirts Shoozie had cut out, and pleased at seeing herself in high beauty, and dressed to the greatest advantage, repaired to the breakfast-room. There, with her work in her hand, she passed some hours in devouring the old novel she kept secreted in her basket, until hearing the clock strike two, she began to grow indignant at her aspirant's tardiness, and ashamed at having sat so long, dressed out and expecting such a "laggard in love."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A LESSON TO LADIES.

While Robina in all the angry scorn of slighted beauty was awaiting Sir David Mc. Dougal, her eyes flashing, her cheeks flushed, and her little proud heart swelling and throbbing beneath her tight boddice, her attention was attracted by a beautiful chestnut mare with a side saddle on it, which "Marmaduke," her mother's 'ain mon,' was walking up and down before the door, leading at the same time another steed for his own riding. The silken mane, the arched and glossy neck, the large

velvet eye, small proud head, and Arab feet of the mare particularly delighted one who, like most of her sex, love to gaze on beauty—and she was impatiently anticipating the time when Luxmore would present her with just such a steed—when Mistress Beckie came to the hall door, and crossly told Marmaduke, that “her Leddy was na’ weel eno’ to get up the day, and so he might jist tak the horses bock agen to the stable.”

“I wish I’d known my Lady’s mind before,” said the man angrily.

“Ye could na’ ken it, mon, before she kenned it hersel,” said Beckie; “so e’en tak bock the horses. I’m na’ to learn why you like riding, master Marmaduke; ye find the Ha’ dull, I’m thinking, and naebody worth looking at; but a few miles awa’ there’s a flauntering lassie, silly eno’ to crack wid ye and speer ater you; I ken ye weel, put by the horses, mon.” And with an indignant toss of

the head, and a spiteful titter, Mrs. Beckie withdrew.

Marmaduke murmured, he liked riding, and there was some truth in the bitter taunt of the slighted Beckie ; he was fine as powder plush and tags could make him. It was a glorious afternoon—he had had all his trouble for nothing, and a certain village belle would watch in vain ; but the cross Beckie heeded not his grumbling—she had slammed the door and left him.

A bold idea crossed Robina's mind. She knew her mother was not up, and that her father would not be home till dinner-time. Riding was her dearest delight ; she had learnt in the best riding-schools in London, was accomplished in an art so rarely mastered by very young women, and above all she knew (for Luxmore had often told her so) that if she was lovely in other garbs, in her riding dress and hat she was irresistible.

“ Marmaduke ! ” she said (gently opening

the window) to the man who still stood sulkily looking at the mare—"Marmaduke, I should like a ride to-day."

"*Can* you ride, Miss?" said the man.

"Oh yes, I am a capital horsewoman, and quite used to it; if you will wait I'll only be a few minutes getting on my habit and hat."

Well, Miss, if you'll take all the blame—I don't know what my Lady will say."

"Oh, she need not know it, nor papa neither, Marmaduke!"

"Well, be quick, miss!" said the man; and added to himself, "What a spunkey lass—she'll lead Sir David a fine life of it, when she's my lady, I'm thinking, and so much the better—he wants to be taken down a peg or two."

With panting haste Robina, aided by the ever ready Shoozie, donned the sky-blue habit and white beaver Spanish hat and feathers (then the most approved fashion for the Amazons of the day)—noiselessly she tripped down stairs—lightly she sprang into the saddle; a few

minutes more, and Shoozie strained her neck in vain—the delighted Robina was out of sight.

How independent felt our young Robina as she cantered along the soft turf; all cares, all fears were forgotten in the exhilarating delight of the moment; the soft breeze, freshened by a recent shower, fanned her cheek and played in her long curls, whose golden auburn seemed to delight in catching the rich beams of the evening sun. She felt as if she could command an army, or defy or win a world. Marmaduke, who was a very conceited puppy, and quite a spoiled servant, muttered to his impertinent self that “she was a fine creature, and that no man need be ashamed of attending her, but that he hoped his kindness in escorting her would put no romantic notions into her head, seeing that they were both engaged.” And then pulling up his collar, he recalled to mind all those most degrading instances of female perversion—those eternal blots on the sex—the marriages of ladies with their footmen. “But,”

he continued, soliloquizing, "It could never be—I'm a man of honour and of feeling! and I could not break my promise, and poor Mary Primrose's little heart—yet we handsome fellows are sorely tempted! Still Miss Robby smiled at me just now as if she thought me worth winning, and I'm sure she couldn't have put her little foot in a Prince's hand, to mount her horse, more playfully and kindly than she did in mine. Well, if it comes to nothing, it must be my merit, not her's, for she's a deuced taking little thing, and I'm no judge of women if she is not as fond and forward as she is pretty!"

Poor Robina! what a lesson to her, and to all other ladies, might a knowledge of the impertinent construction put upon such condescension be! With all her faults and follies, she *was* a Lady: and a footman, however tall, handsome, and richly dressed, was to her no more than any other menial, and as little likely to occur to her mind as a lover, as the horse he

rode or the donkey braying over the hedge. It was in the most perfect innocence of the possibility of so degrading an interpretation of her somewhat condescending and coaxing manner of persuading the man to attend her, that she had exposed herself to the horrible and insulting suspicion—insulting even if it never passed the prison house of his vain and vulgar bosom ; and thousands of ladies do as unwittingly and innocently expose themselves to the vulgar and revolting misconstructions, not merely of such fellows, but of all their associates.

To *them* the man is only a low and gaudy menial—outwardly all respectful deference and obsequious attention—to *himself* he is a lord of the creation, and when really well dressed, tall and handsome, is in his own conceit a much finer fellow than any, behind whose chair he stands, or whose attentions he sees so coveted and so courted.

His livery, which, as a badge of servitude,

would be, however becoming, nothing to any woman of taste and delicacy, is only in his eyes, a rich and becoming suit which must eclipse the sober puritan garb of the gentlemen of the day. He cannot understand or appreciate his own deficiencies in refinement, intellect, birth and breeding; and as nothing fosters the growth of presumption and conceit like luxurious living without mental improvement, and bodily indulgence without mental culture, so no honourable dandy or youthful lordling so overrates himself and his fascinations, as do the conceited actors in that comedy daily represented, 'High life below stairs.'

Robina, in such high spirits, and so well mounted, was not disposed to pay much respect to boundaries; she had soon passed out of the gates of the Glenlonely estate, and on appealing to Marmaduke as to the best road for her to take, was of course directed by him the way which led past Mary Primrose's cottage.

When they reached this pretty cottage,

through whose woodbine tapestried casement a blooming face was seen, Marmaduke informed the young lady that he had a message to leave, and asked her whether she had any objection while he delivered it, to canter along a green sward path singularly soft and inviting, which ran parallel with a beautiful trout stream. Robina was delighted to do so. Marmaduke, in the company of his belle, and in praises of himself, forgot the flight of time, and Robina was soon out of sight.

The young coquette, however, soon perceived with pleasure that at a little distance, and placed so that they must see her as she passed, was a party of anglers.

Gentlemen they were evidently, and in the huge proportions, immense though handsome features, and flaming red hair unadorned by the powder then in fashion, of one of the party, Robina felt sure she recognised Sir Davie Mc. Dougal; the other two were sporting looking men—one a pale, the other a purple looking

votary of Bacchus ; but all three sufficiently connoisseurs in beauty to betray some surprise, and no little admiration, at the lovely vision which unattended, and to them quite unknown, centered so gracefully past them.

Robina knew that the eyes of all were fixed on her, and she cast down her own, while her colour rose.

"Why who the deuce is that, Mc.Dougal?" asked the bottle-nosed Jem Fraser, when her fleet steed had borne her out of hearing.

"I ken na mair aboot it than yersel," answered Mc.Dougal, colouring, for a sort of half suspicion, half hope, crossed his mind, that this lovely creature might be the very girl to a union with whom he had looked forward so listlessly.

"It canna be Mc.Grigor's dochter," said Sir Hugh Morice, the pale and dissipated looking third of this trio.

"Mc.Grigor's dochter!" echoed Fraser, "na na, I remember Mc.Grigor's dochter years gane

by, a little round-faced, rosy, milk-maid looking lassie, wi' hair as red as Mc.Dougal's, and form as fat as a Christmas turkey—na, na, its mair likely its ain of the Dooglasses; I hear they're staying at Dooglas jist noo, and ain o' them is ca'd, for her beauty and wit, "The blue belle of Scotland." They're wild too, and auld friends o' the prood auld Leddy Mc.Grigor, and I doot na' that beautiful girl is the identical "Blue belle" wha's turning half the heads, and breaking half the hearts, in Scotland, and has already they say had mair than ain ducal coronet at her feet!"

"Weel! weel! it may be sa," said Fraser, "but if I remember right, the blue belle, as they ca' her, has hair and eyes as black as a sloe; and mony's the little fat, round-faced, rosy wee thing o' ten, that at seventeen is a very lily, and mony a red head hae I seen ripen into a lovely auburn before this."

"Fraser's na' that wrang," said Mc.Dougal; "it may be Robina Mc.Grigor after a'."

"And if it is," said Sir Hugh, "I'm ready to dispute the prize wid ye; but I bet you a hoondred to ain it is na'."

"Dune!" said Mc.Dougal; "sa to mak sure, let us e'en follow at a deestance behint the trees; we'll sune ken where she gangs."

"I'll tak yer bet too, Morice," said Jem Fraser; "guineas let it be, a hoondred to ain."

"Dune again," said Morice; and they hastened after the fair Amazon. In a little while, as the road branched off into several different directions, they agreed to part company; and as luck would have it, the road Sir Davie took, was the identical one along which Robina had passed, and on which he was ere long overtaken by Marmaduke.

Marmaduke was well known to him, and the moment he perceived him, he hailed him, and soon became master of the important fact that the beauty who had passed him was no other than his own Intended, Robina Mc.Grigor!

Marmaduke was quick enough to perceive

the heightened colour with which he learnt this news, and the extreme eagerness of his inquiries on the subject; he was not therefore surprised when Sir David Mc.Dougal sent his best respects to Leddy Mc.Grigor, and announced his intention of begging a cup of tea from her fair hands that very evening.

“I will wait on her Leddyship at seven preceesely,” said Sir Davie.

And Marmaduke galloped on after his young mistress, muttering to himself, “He might hae tipped me a poor half-crown for my good news—well, I hope Miss Robby will lead him a wild-goose chase, and jilt him after all. If she’ll take my advice, she will; I’m sure she may do better than marry that stingy Scot, to be shut up in his dreary old haunted castle, with all those old maids—why she’d be happier as landlady of a smart Inn in some gay place, with a fine young fellow like me; but poor Mary must not be forsaken; besides I do be-

lieve the cottager's child has more of the needful than the baronet's daughter."

Robina was not much surprised to hear that she had seen the actual Sir Davie, nor did his eagerness to pay his respects to her excite any great emotion in the petted idol of the adoring Luxmore; only she resolved, if possible, to disappoint him who had so slighted her; and when on arriving at Glenlonely, she found not only that she had not been missed by her mother, but that word had come from her father, that he should not be home for two or three days, she resolved to have her own way.

Pretending a head-ache, she went fairly to bed; and when her mother, on the receipt of Sir David's message, sent to desire her to prepare to receive him, she returned as her answer that she was far from well, indeed much too unwell to rise, and must beg to be excused seeing any company that evening.

Lady Mc.Grigor knew not what to do; to appear herself was impossible, for the *ci-devant*

beauty was keeping her room, not from illness, but to undergo a tedious chemical and cosmetic process for improving her complexion. To appear with it half completed was impossible. Again and again she sent Beckie to her daughter's room to urge her to rise and receive Sir David; but Robina was obstinate; and when Sir David Mc.Dougal, dressed out to the greatest advantage, and on tip-toe with expectation, arrived a little before seven in the old family coach, it was with assumed reluctance, but inward glee, that Marmaduke informed him of his master's absence, Lady Mc.Grigor's indisposition, and Miss Mc.Grigor's having sent down her maid to say she was fatigued with her ride, and was not equal to receiving any visitors—having, in short, retired to rest.

However Sir David happened to be the very man to value an object in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining it; and though he certainly felt extremely piqued and disappointed, he thought it best to leave a most respectful

message of condolence and regret, and to announce that he would have the honour of calling in the forenoon of the morrow to inquire after the ladies. This done, the heavy old coach was put in motion, and bore away the disappointed wooer.

END OF FIRST VOLUME.

THE
LIFE OF A BEAUTY.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Ill," "The Breach of Promise,"
"Gavin Grey," "The Marrying Man," "The
Match-maker," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE LIFE OF A BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

SYMPTOMS OF LOVE.

Sir David Mc.Dougal was not more fortunate the next day. Lady Mc.Grigor *could* not, and Robina *would* not appear. The young lady however had an interview with her mamma, who sate the while with a shawl thrown over her head and face, and in this interview the mother was convinced that the daughter was right—that Sir David's first slights deserved this reprisal, and that his present *empressement*

was evidently chiefly owing to the unexpected obstacles he had encountered.

"However," said the mamma, "I advise you for your own sake, Robina, to receive Sir David before your father's return. I care nothing at all about it myself," added her Ladyship coldly, "except that of course I wish to see you settled promptly and advantageously; but I mean your father's displeasure has no weight with me on the subject. I have never accustomed him to exercise any control, or even influence over me, and as his approbation has little inducement, so his displeasure has no terrors for me; but as his daughter, you, of course must feel otherwise, and he is so violent and vindictive that I advise you on no account to provoke his anger, or thwart him in his favourite project, but merely, as I said before, for your own sake, for I really care nothing about it; and now go and send Beckie to me—this is a very important crisis!"

Robina thought for a moment the mother meant a very important crisis in the daughter's

fate, but soon found she alluded solely to her own complexion and the dangerous cosmetic she was using. Disgusted at such heartlessness, Robina hastened away. She found Sir David had left word that he would have the honour of calling the next day at Glenlonely with his sisters, and that he humbly hoped, as one of them was an invalid, Miss Mc.Grigor, at least, would be so good as to be at home. A beautiful bouquet and a basket of fine fruit, with another of glistening and bright crimson-speckled trout, caught Robina's eye; they were offerings at her shrine.

"I must receive him to-morrow," she said to herself; "it will not do to slight his sisters, though so far so good—and if I can go on as prosperously as I have begun, I shall, I hope, soon have this "Lion of the North" crouching at my feet, but only to reject and spurn him from me!"

CHAPTER II.

THE LION IN LOVE.

The next day Robina was betimes at her toilet; and yet even before she had quite completed the elaborate process, the old family coach of the Mc.Dougals might be descried at the end of the avenue, moving along in all the state of four long-tailed black horses, a burly coachman, and an antique footman, full-dressed, even to the extent of a hot-house bouquet.

The Mc.Dougal arms were gaudily blazoned on the old coach, and the pomp of the equipage was in keeping with the pride and hauteur of

three prim old spinsters, who thought nothing on earth approached in attraction to their pet brother, who, though many years their junior, was the sole representative of the ancient and illustrious house of Mc.Dougal.

By their advice, Sir Davie had dressed himself for this memorable occasion in full Highland costume, and certainly the picturesque garb set off to advantage the colossal proportions of his figure, his regular but huge features, and abundance of flaming hair and whisker, which, unlike most red hair, being kept with the greatest nicety, was glossy and ambrosial in the extreme.

"A penny for yer thoughts, Davie!" said the eldest sister, a small deformed spinster of fifty-five, but looking much older, blind of one eye and seeing very imperfectly with the other, but gazing on her brother with unspeakable admiration, purblind as she was. "A penny for yer thoughts; yer ower silent, I'm thinking, on this occasion; it canna be that ye feel the sma'est parteecele o' onxiety, brither—you, the

last o' the Mc.Dougals, and sic a mon as ye are, and the lassie, Mc.Grigor's dochter, wi' na tocher, and na mair to motch ye in hukes than yon barn-door hen, can motch our paycock at the castle."

"Ha' ye then seen Miss Mc.Grigor, sister?" asked Sir Davie.

"Na, na, but I ken weel, be she what she may, she's na motch in form or face for you, brither, na mair than she is in fortune and family!"

"I might ha' kenned ye had na' seen her," said Sir Davie; "bide a wee, bide a wee, Ailsie, and ye'll change your note, and think I'm ower prood to aspire to sic a bonnie, bonnie gem!"

"I change my note indeed!" screeched the lady, in a voice which proved how desirable such an event would be; I'm na fule, and na bleend, (neither assertion seemed well supported) and this I say, I niver yet saw the mon to compare with ye, nor the lassie to motch ye.

Ye came o' a family, Davie, aye renowned for beauty and wit. I remember me, our puir father was a noble-looking stately mon, that a' speered ater when he walked the streets; I canna say he was sa surpreesingly handsome as yersel, Davie, but of a' the men I ever saw, he came next to ye. Our mither was a Coort beauty o' the first order; and for oursels, it ill becomes me to boast, but ye ken, Davie, whether we hae, or hae na', made a noise in the warld o' fashion.—Hard to please, and may be a thought too proud we may be, for nane o' your seesters, Davie, ever yet saw the mon she deemed a motch for her in ony way. But I mention this merely to keep ye in heart, brither, and to mind ye that it ill becomes the speerit and pretensions of a Mc.Dougal, and thot na' the manest o' the race, to be onxious and silent and dootful when he gangs to coort the babie-faced dochter of a Mc.Grigor."

"Seester Ailsie speaks weel, brither," said Miss Kat'rine Mc.Dougal, the second sister,

and who was, for a woman, as gigantic in her proportions as Sir Davie for a man—boasting too, with hair abundant and flaming as his own, and being about ten years his senior. “I came, I saw, I conquered,” might weel be the motto of a’ whase veins bound the high bluid o’ the Mc.Dougals; I canna understand wha’ change has creepit ower ye, Davie, but I must e’en say it ill becomes my father’s son, and our brither, to sit pale and cooard on an occasion like this. Ye were wont to be a braw wooer, a vary lion amang the lassies—but ever since ye saw the little hizzie Robina, yer an altered mon. I fear me, yer in luv, brither; and if ye are, and ye let the lassie ken it, yer a lost mon. Troost a woman, for kenning her ain sex; let her doot whether she can win you or na’, and she’ll tak a warld o’ pains aboot it. Let her see her power, and she’ll laugh at ye, mon!”

“Thot adveece,” sighed Miss Miranda Mc. Dougal, the youngest (who, in spite of a squint, was very sentimental) and had not given up all

thoughts of settling in life—"thot adveece is easier given than followed, seesters ; Luve can mak a cooard and a slave even o' a Mc.Dougal, and I only hope our dear brither, if he is destined to feel a' the pongs o' passion, may ken a' its ecstatic delights too."

"Thank you, dearest Miranda," said Sir Davie, whose heart in its present state responded better to her tender wishes than to his elder sisters' spirited exhortations ; "I have been, as Kat'rine says, a braw wooer hitherto, and a lion amang the lassies, but I never was in luve ; whether I am destined to be so noo, time must show, but even if I am, I troost I sall never be found wanting in the spirit that becomes my father's son and your brither. I'm na' to learn, that I am far mair honouring than honoured in this alleance, and though I canna deny that the lassie's charms ha' made some impression on my foncy, its na' certain thot it will last, and thot I may not send her to the right aboot after a'."

"There spak my ain brither," said Miss Mc.Dougal, "and noo here we are, and I niver saw even Davie himsel luke half sa braw as he does the day."

But in spite of all his boasts and bravado, Davie changed colour two or three times, before Marmaduke announced the party, and the braw wooer looked uncommonly sheepish when he found himself in the actual presence of the young Robina, who, in high beauty and with perfect presence of mind, did the honours of her father's house, with a London-bred grace, and apologized with a due mixture of politeness and indifference for her parents' absence.

Even Miss Mc.Dougal was a little, (what is vulgarly called, taken aback ;) but recovering herself, she said, "I hope, Miss Mc.Grigor, you like Glenlonely."

"I like the beauties of nature, however wild and uncultivated," replied Robina, "and after so long a parting, I rejoice in my dear parents' company ; but fresh from the warm South, and

all the varied elegancies and delights of London, I cannot, just at first, feel much enchanted with Glenlonely !”

“Deed then, if your stay in London has made Scotland distasteful to ye, Miss Mc. Grigor, to my mind it’s a pity you ever visited the South at a’.”

“There may be mair frippery show in London than amang us,” said Miss Katrine, “but for real grandeur and real worth there’s na land like bonnie Scotland !”

“Have you ever visited London,” asked Robina calmly, though she knew full well the spinsters had never been farther South than Edinburgh.

“Nae, but for a’ that, we can form an opeenion.”

“A very different one to what you will form if you ever do visit London,” said Robina, persuasively ; “but you, Sir David, you I am sure have been to the great city—what think you of it ?”

Sir David could not resist the appeal of Robina's eyes and smile.

"I think it only too bewitching a place," he said, "and I fancy there is a magic in it which those educated there contrive to bring awa' with them."

Robina bowed with the pleased nonchalance of an acknowledged beauty, accustomed to every species of compliment. The two elder spinsters drew up and looked belligerent and contemptuous, but Miranda, sighing, said: "There is but ain magician, and I believe he'll be foond as easily in the Nooth as the Sooth. He can mak fairy lond appear wherever he dwells, and where he is na', a' is barren and drear."

"And how do ye contrive to pass yer time in a place you find sa unco' dull, Miss Mc. Grigor?" asked Miss Mc.Dougal.

"Nay," said Robina, "I said not it was dull; in truth, I never find it dull anywhere, and am never "less alone than when alone." I

can amuse myself with my own reflections even while my fingers are engaged in such trifling household duties as these"—and she pointed to the pile of linens beside her, which were placed there, as if just cut out, and prepared by herself.

"Treeffles indeed!" said Miss Mc.Dougal, "we Scotch think the making a set of fine shirts onything but a treeffling occupation, and consider it ain, that demands our fullest attention."

"In the South," said Robina, "we are taught to consider needle-work as a merely mechanical occupation for the fingers, while the mind can improve itself by the loftier pleasures of contemplation."

Again Miss Mc.Dougal and Miss Katrine cast up their eyes, and Miss Miranda said: "It is lucky for woman that she can suffer her thoughts to roam while her fingers ply the homely task, else would a creature all soul and sentiment become a mere household drudge."

Robina now, at Sir David's request, produced some of the loftier evidences of her talents, fancy works, principally done by poor Eva Morris, and huge drawings finished off by masters. She suffered herself too to be led to a piano, on which she thundered away at a sonata, and electrified Sir David by singing an elaborate Italian cantata in the last opera style; this done, she ordered refreshments, and accepted (dependent on her father's sanction) an invitation to spend a week at Mc.Dougal Castle.

"I fear ye'll find the Castle unco' dull wi' yer Southron notions, Miss Mc.Grigor," said Miss Mc.Dougal.

But Robina knew that it could not be duller than Glenlonely, and indeed with Sir Davie to captivate, and his sisters to quiz, she thought it must be very much more amusing.

So playfully taking the cross old spinster's unwilling hand, she said: "Do not judge me too hastily; your own heart beats not with a

deeper love for Scotland than does mine ; some of my tastes and opinions may have been formed where I have passed so many years, but all my affections, like yours, belong to this dear land. In London the sight of a sprig of heather could draw tears from my eyes, and a blue bell cheer my very soul ; bide a wee, bide a wee, till ye ken me better," she added, for the first time speaking with a Scotch accent—"I'm a true Scotch lassie after a'."

Her manner was so endearing and her words so flattering, that even Miss Mc.Dougal was beguiled into kissing the fair cheek she offered. Miss Katrine did the same, and Miranda clasped her to her heart. The colossal Sir Davie ventured to kiss her hand, but with the reverence due to a Queen's, and with many a sheepish glance he withdrew.

"I canna mak her out," said Miss Mc.Dougal, when again *en route*, "but she's baith bonnie and cunning, I'm thinking."

"At ony rate she's toorned our Davie's handsome head," said Miss Katrine.

"Or won his heart," said Miranda.

But Sir Davie only gave vent to a sigh, so loud and so deep, that one would have thought Boreas alone could have breathed it; and it was in a' the moody silence of the lion in love, that the great Sir Davie passed out of the Glenlonely estate and reached his castle, where dinner and whiskey punch, with the boundless flatteries of all his sisters, did their utmost to cheer and enliven him.

CHAPTER III.

TYRANNY IN PARENTS BEGETS TREACHERY IN
CHILDREN.

Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor returned from his secret expedition, and that in no very good humour. Robina trembled as she heard him scolding and swearing in the passage, after he had ascertained that his liege Lady was out of hearing. It was fortunate for the trembling girl that her father recovered his composure on hearing of the attentions of Sir David, and the invitation to Mc.Dougal Castle which his daughter had received.

"This looks promising, lassie," he said, "and as if ye had made a gude impression, whilk becomes daily mair important. I'll e'en drop a line this very evening to say I'll bring ye over to the castle the morn.

"I had rather go a few days later," said Robina, who had not only the natural woman's wish not to seem too ready, but also a good deal of finery in progress.

"Ye'd always rather anything but what I wish," growled Sir Davie, "and ye'll gain naething by it, lassie. I hod intended taking you over there to lunch, and noo ye'll please to be ready to start in time to breakfast at the castle."

Some bitter tears filled Robina's eyes at this tyranny, and a determination to thwart her father and revenge herself swelled her bosom; but she had no choice; the note submitted to Lady Mc.Grigor, and approved of by her, was dispatched: that Lady, her complexion much improved, came down in high beauty and

good humour to her game of piquet, and Robina obtained permission to retire to her room, to prepare herself and her wardrobe for the important visit of the next day.

Robina was easily awakened from her balmy sleep and the ambrosial slumber of early youth at early morn, to set out on her somewhat unpleasant excursion.

In her morning dreams the enamoured Lux more was at her feet, in some palace home; a delicious banquet was spread before her, and fairy music floated on the breeze—and from all this, she woke to a harsh summons from her father, and to set out before breakfast in a Scotch mist and an open carriage, for the dreary abode of a man she had resolved to reject, and his sisters, two of whom she already disliked, while she despised the third.

The ride was dull and cold, her father cross and stern. The two elder spinsters, who were formally seated at the breakfast table, seemed more repelling and haughty than at the first

meeting, and even Miranda, who like all sentimentalists professed to be under the skyey influence, and nervously sensitive to every change of weather, was dull and dispirited.

The schoolings of his two elder sisters had taken some effect on the great Sir Davie. His manner was much less *empressé* than it had been at Glenlonely. To Sir Grigor (who was very affectionate and even obsequious to him) he was rather stiff and sullen, and when, after an ample Scotch breakfast, that gentleman proposed returning home, Sir Davie and his sisters but faintly urged him to pass the day at the Castle.

Still to that faint request Sir Grigor yielded, much to Robina's dismay, for she felt doubly constrained and uncomfortable in her father's presence. She felt, too, what to a belle is a serious annoyance, that she was not in beauty—the cold morning air had blanched her cheeks and made her nose red, uncurled her hair, and checked her spirits. She would have rejoiced

in the privilege of retiring to her room to recover and repose, but the stiff manners of the ladies did not admit of her taking any such liberty, or making any such proposal.

She saw her father looking discontentedly and angrily at her, as she sat silent and abashed, and yet every effort she made to rouse her spirits, ended in a deeper depression. At length Sir Grigor proposed a turn in the park with Sir Davie, and though her pride was wounded at the ready acquiescence of the latter, her vanity was soothed by his departure.

When he was gone, the eldest Miss Mc. Dougal said, "I hope, Miss Mc. Grigor, you've na' forgotten your work-bag. The needle is the chief occupation of my sisters and myself, and indeed without it, I canna weel see how womankind can be profitably employed; or lead a better life than the idle lounging creatures, wha ca' themsels the Lords o' the creation."

"In my hurry I forgot my work and work-bag," said Robina; "but I shall be very happy

to assist any of you ladies in any work you have in hand."

"In your hurry, Miss Mc.Grigor—and how came ye to be sa hurried then?"

Robina did not like a question that sounded so like a reproach; but she good-humouredly said: "Papa returned late last evening, and eager for my pleasure, decided I should set off early this morning!"

"That must ha' been unco' inconvenient, I'm thinking," said the spinster; "however we are the gainers; we had scarcely hoped to see you for a week or twa: but fra Sir Grigor's note last night, we certainly did expect you earlier the morn; these fine summer days we're seldom in bed after five!"

Robina coloured; she felt that she was not very welcome, and was yet suspected of a great eagerness to come.

"Would you like to see your room?" asked Miranda, pitying her confusion.

Robina wished nothing better.

"In the meantime," said Miss Mc.Dougal, "Katrine and I will see what work we can find you; but as we each have our regular piece in hand, its na' sa easy."

"Oh, never mind then," said Robina, hoping to escape the threatened infliction—"with books and a pencil I can pass my time very pleasantly."

"But na' very profitably," said Miss Mc.Dougal, as the door closed on Robina and Miranda.

"I am so overjoyed to find a congenial spirit," sighed the latter, passing her arm round Robina's waist; "I have so long pined for a friend—a confidante. My sisters are so much older, and so different to me; but I will not complain—my prayer has been heard, and you are sent to me at last."

Robina could scarcely refrain a laugh. The damsel who spoke was quite old enough to be her mother, but she wore her hair in a Brutus crop, with a green ribbon binding her fore-

head ; a white dress and a green sash completed her sentimental and juvenile toilette ; but her marked features, her sallow complexion, greyish hair, and thin old-looking hands, rendered this costume particularly unsuitable and absurd.

"I am so glad too," added Miranda, "to know you, just as it were, at the beginning of the romance of your life, when you must so need a confidante. Oh, I hope for once the coorse of true love will run smooth—smoother for you, Robina, than it does for me ! My friends will, I fear, never consent to my happiness ; but who could have a word to say against, or a fault to find with, Davie. How shall I bear your wedding—how shall I act as bridesmaid—I who ought to stand before the altar as a bride !"

By this time they had reached the large, low, gloomy room where Robina was to sleep ; and while she turned away her face, to hide her smiles at this strange, sudden, and unexpected confidence, Miranda threw herself into her

arms, called her 'Sister,' and wept upon her bosom.

Robina tried to comfort her, but the selfish are poor comforters at best, and in this case the absurd certainly triumphed over the pathetic.

Being rather curious, Robina tried to obtain some knowledge of the name of the lover, and the history of the love ; but on this subject Miranda let nothing escape her.

Broken ejaculations, murmurs, moans, and vows of constancy, were all Robina could elicit, and of these she grew so weary that she was not sorry when a summons from Miss Mc.Dougal, requesting their presence in the work-room, sent Miranda to her own apartment to bathe her eyes, compose her spirits, and readjust her dress, and left Robina a few minutes to gaze around her, and ponder on her fate and its discomforts.

"Papa once gone," she said to herself, "I will make myself at home here ; that sentimental old simpleton, Miranda, I can easily

manage ; and her brother, as soon as I can appear to advantage, warm, dressed, and at my ease, he will be in love, and my slave—the two old termagants I may have more trouble with, but if they think I am come to this dreary Castle, to get up at five, and work my eyes out, they are mistaken. Papa once off, I will not set a stitch in anything, nor get up an hour sooner than suits myself; and they shall not resent it either; they're all afraid of their brother in their narrow hearts, and I'll rule him, or know the reason why."

When Miranda returned, she assumed a playful manner, and skipped lightly down stairs with her new sister, as she insisted on calling Robina—told her how she often pretended to lose her needle or her thimble to escape from her sisters and her work—and proposed a turn round the garden at the first opportunity.

Robina and Miranda found Miss Mc.Dougal and Miss Katrine seated with their work, in a

dull, dingy room, which had no prospect from its large curtainless windows, but that of a court-yard—not a picture on its walls, not a book on its shelves, no sofa, *Bergère*, looking-glass, or footstool—but it was very light, clean, and empty. Spinning wheels and embroidery frames, with a large table for cutting out upon, implements of housewifery, and working materials, formed its comfortless and uninviting furniture.

"Can ye spin, Miss Mc.Grigor?" asked Miss Mc.Dougal.

"No."

"The mañr's the pity, for though linen's cheap enoo to buy, there's nane to my mind like one's ain spinning. Davie has na' a shirt, nor hae we a sheet or a table-cloth that was na' spun in this room."

"You can knit I suppose," said Miss Katrine, handing Robina a stocking she had begun.

"Of that art I am also ignorant."

The elder sisters exchanged glances of dismay, and Miranda gave Robina a playful wink and nudge.

"Puir Davie!" said Miss Mc.Dougal, "he has never yet worn the stocking that was na' knitted in this room. Aweel, we are making him a set o' fine shirts, like those ye were working at Glenlonely. I'm aulder than you are, and my een are na' what they were, but we'll e'en, if ye like, mak each ain for the natest and the fastest. Davie must na' ken wha' we're doing, but a leetle emulation maks the needle fly apace. Here's ain coot out and a' ready. Mony, mony's the happy day I hae spent in such motches wi' my sisters and the neebor lossies, and never did Time gang sic a gate as when a' were trying to keep him bock a wee."

Robina had nothing to urge against this, to her, odious arrangement, and full of wrath and spite, shé began her task.

The gentlemen did not return till it was time to dress for dinner, and it was with a head-ache

from her unwonted exertion, and an intense disgust of her work, the work-room, and her companions, that Robina repaired to her room to make her toilette.

"How shall I get through a week in this odious place?" she thought, while she vainly tried to drive back the tears that would well forth, and to swallow the hysterical sobs that nearly choked her. "Oh, Luxmore!" she cried, "let me but see you once more, once more hear you urge me to be your's, and I will not promote one moment's unnecessary delay, or put one obstacle in the way of what you call your happiness, and what I feel will be my delivery from unbearable misery!"

After this resolve, she grew calmer, and dressed herself with a lighter heart, to renew the impression she saw her morning appearance had so much diminished.

At dinner her spirits rose, as she saw Sir Davie's large eyes follow her lively movements,

and perceived that her father noticed with pleasure his altered manner. Coquettes generally shine in proportion to the notice they obtain. Robina, re-assured, grew brilliant. Sir Davie was just the heavy kind of man to be the slave of animation in woman. Robina talked, laughed, jested, ventured to rally Sir Davie, who delighted to be joked with; and when the stiff old spinsters withdrew, it was with a reverential fondness he gazed at her as she tripped out, and in his gentlest accents that he said: "Blame yourself, Miss Mc. Grigor, if you see us at the tea table before you wish for us!"

Sir Davie was true to his word. Long before Sir Grigor had drunk half he could drink, and would have drunk, and long before the most monotonous ennui had exhausted the lively Robina's spirits, the gentlemen appeared in the drawing-room.

Robina, determined to secure her conquest

and show her power before her father, sang, played on the old spinnet, and even danced a new Spanish dance, then the rage in London, and which showed to uncommon advantage the graces of her person and the finish of her steps.

Sir Davie encored it with a rapture delightful to the father and galling to the elder sisters. Robina, who seemed the very soul of amiable compliance, went through it again with, if possible, added graces.

With this the evening closed, for Miss McDougal folded up her work, and rang the bell for the servants to come to prayers.

But Robina knew by the warm and exulting embrace of her father, and the passionate pressure of Sir Davie's hand, that her point was gained, and her conquest made. She hastened upstairs with a light foot and a light heart; but before she could consider this fatiguing day fairly at an end, she had to

endure the bore of another
scene with Miranda, who seems
at will, and to be awfully
sleep!

CHAPTER IV.

THE DISCOVERY.

It was Sir Grigor's voice that at a very early hour aroused poor Robina to all the harsh realities of actual life. He spoke low and kindly.

"Get up, my darling!" he said; "the ladies are stirring, this is a very early family, and nothing annoys Miss Mc.Dougal like being kept waiting."

"Make your mind easy," Robina said, "I'll be very quick, papa"—and she sprang out of bed,

murmuring to herself—"it's the first and the last time I'll get up at this detestable hour, in this odious place."

But she dressed so promptly, that she found even her early hostess was not in the breakfast-room. As the windows opened to the ground, and the sun looked most invitingly in, through the jasmine and clematis, Robina strolled out in a little parterre. This parterre was formed of paths and beds of flowers, bordered with box, and formed into a variety of pleasing figures, which made up one harmonious whole. Each bed contained only flowers of a kind, and the whole was surrounded by a well-clipped hedge of yew, so thick and even, as to form a sort of wall.

In a corner of this parterre was a bower, and here Robina sate down to enjoy the varied and delicious fragrance of the flowers opening to the morning sun. After sitting there awhile, Robina became aware that some person or rather people were pacing up and down an

avenue on the other side of the hedge, and though they could not perceive her in the least, she, as they approached, could distinctly hear their voices. As chance would have it, they stopped close to the bower, and Robina soon became aware that the speakers were her father and Sir Davie, and that the subject of their conversation was herself. Her heart beat quick, and her colour came and went; but curious, and with little principle, she held her breath to hear all she could.

Sir Davie spoke: "Weel, mon, much as I've lost by ye, and these infernal speculations, I canna hault out ony longer; I've na' the heart to see you ruined, and I'll e'en do it; of course I understond, that I mak this addeetional sacrifice for my future father-in-law—and that there's na doot o' Robeena's consent directly I propose, whilk of coorse will be as sune as I can mak an opportunity and muster courage, for somehow the lassie, young as she is, daunts me."

"The foct is, my dearest Davie, my chosen son-in-law," said Sir Grigor, "the little gypsey has contrived to make you love her, and a mon in luv, I ken by experience is easily daunted ; but cheer up, mon—she's ower head and ears in luv with you hersel'—I never saw sic a change in my life—I kenned na' my ain bairn."

Sir Davie made a curious noise—a sort of pleased howl of gratified vanity.

"Na, na, do ye think it, Grigor? by my soul, to make your mind easy, I'd advance another hoondred or twa on the wedding day, if I could feel quite sure she morried me for luv and luv alane!"

"Why, wha' for con she morry ye, mon? You're rich, and of auld lineage; but this Luxmore, wha is sa mod after her, has ten times your wealth, and is heir to an earldom."

"Ond are ye quite sure she's given him up?"

"She's quite forgotten his very existence,

mon. Why, he's a wee, crippled, croompled body, seeckly and wizen, and auld eno' to be her father—she never cared a straw for him. It was dune by that auld motchmaker and go-between Miss Mc.Prudie, but the fellow canna gie her up sae easily, and I think mysel' the suner ye mak her yours the better and the safer—I've intercepted twa letters fra' Luxmore already."

Robina's heart stood still.

"Ha' ye indeed, Grigor, and where is he then?"

"Lurking aboot Muirvale, and expecting, I doot na', some answer to be sent to the Inn they ca' Muir House. He'll expect lang enoo!"

"I wish I hod him at twal paces," said Sir Davie.

"Pshaw, mon, wha' for? he offered first—he's na' to blame—he saw Robina, and proposed honourably eno', and would ha' settled half his fortune on the lassie; and she, as I told

her, was aboot to let an auld maid chuse a husband for her, a wee, crippled, crumpled, whey-faced Soothron—aweel she left him in the loorch—and fell ower head and ears in luve wi' the brawest, finest mon in a' Scotland, wha has but to ask and to get her—I'm thinking, Davie. If ony ain has cause o' complaint, it's the pair Soothron himsel'."

"Aweel, I believe you're right eno' there, Grigor. I'll propose to her during this week, as sune as I can find courage to do it, and then the suner the wedding taks place the better; there's mony a slip twixt the cup and the lip. Here's the treeffe I promeessed to advance ye jist noo, and the boolk o' the sum ye sall hae on my wedding day! And noo we'll gae in to breakfast. Do ye think Robina 'll be drest and down? Ah, she moost conform to our Northern customs, and tak pottern in a' things by my twa elder sisters, Grigor, when she's my ain bonnie wee wife. It's they'll hae

the training o' her, and na' my puir, silly, crack-brained, novel-reading Miranda, nor ony o' the foshionable flirts and jeelts o' Edinbro'. Though I'm young in years, Grigor, I ken the warld and its ways, and my wife shall niver be led into temptation. Her pleasures must a' centre in hame and in me. This premature gout, Grigor, has made me wise before my time. I would na' be too streect wi' a bonnie young wife like Beenie, but I'm sa sure that woman's best happiness is found at hame, ond that ane pleasure begets a longing for anither, that I'm resolved, na' smiles nor tears shall mak me tak her to ball, or root, or play. I ken na' why she suld ever see the inside of Edinbro'."

"Weel, my dear Davie, of coorse in a' thot ye will e'en suit yersel, and Beenie's the very lassie to be moulded to your wishes, and not only to stay at hame, but to mak hame cheerful to ye."

“ Oh, I shall need nothing but Beenie, and her luve, and her tolents. I’ve sawn my wild oats, Grigor, and they’ve brought me before now a plentiful supply o’ barley water. Na, na, I’ll na’ see ony mon flirt wi’ my wife as I’ve flirted wi’ ithers. Ance Leddy Mc.Dougal, and Beenie must find a’ her pleasures here, and in me !”

Arm-in-arm they walked away.

“ The Muir House, Muirvale, there he is to be found,” murmured Robina. “ Thence shall he come and rescue me. Selfish, unnatural father, to sell me for a little help towards some odious speculation. Idiotic, blind, boasting tyrant of a Sir David ! how I shall glory in deceiving and outwitting you both. There’s many a slip twixt the cup and the lip, as you so vulgarly declared ; and many will laugh you to scorn as I do, detestable egotist ! Oh, Luxmore, when I see what other men are, I wish I had a heart capable of loving thee better ; but

what matter to thee—it seems all woman's heart should be ; and if I am true to thee, it is not my fault if I am not the angel thine own bright fancy has painted me!"

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTER-PLOT.

Robina returned in high spirits to the breakfast-room. She felt as if her rescue were at hand. By the knowledge of her father's double-dealing, and interception of Mr. Luxmore's letters, Sir Davie's selfish intentions, and her lover's near abode, she had gained a costly advantage, and now her object was to make the most of it.

She adroitly contrived to ascertain from Miranda that the nearest post-office was at a village a few miles off—at a little country shop where

everything was sold—grocery, chandlery, cheap millinery, silks, threads, tapes, toys, and sugar plums. To write to Luxmore was her first object, and then to convey her letter safely to this post-office her next, for Robina was too wise to trust any one but herself.

To her great relief her father departed soon after breakfast; and when he was safely off, Robina, without heeding any of Miss Mc. Dougal's hints about the workroom, the shirts, and the value of time, fairly challenged Sir Davie to ride with her to Glenallan, the village in question, as she declared she not only pined for a ride, but wanted to get some silks to knit him a purse.

Sir Davie was too much flattered by the proposal not to acquiesce, and Robina having ascertained that Miranda was both very unobservant and very fond of riding, proposed that she should give them the sanction of her presence.

This too was agreed upon; and though Miss

Mc.Dougal sneered, and Miss Katrine cast up her eyes, and both decided, "Robina was a bauld young hizzie, to pick and chuse fra' amang her betters, and leave suitable occupation to gang tearing like mod about the country," they had no power to thwart her, and sulkily betook themselves to the work-room.

While the affected Miranda was tricking herself out for her ride, Robina found time, unobserved and unsuspected, to dash off a few lines to Luxmore. She told him how she was situated, of the plan of wedding her to a man she loathed, and tearing her from one only too dear to her; she alluded to some parts of the conversation she had overheard—begged Mr. Luxmore to remain quiet till her return to Glenlonely, when she would contrive to give him a meeting—and bade him, if she found no other opportunity of communicating with him, to be on the eighth evening from that on which she wrote, in a plantation beneath her window, which she accurately described.

This done, she arrayed herself in haste, and was ready long before Miranda made her appearance. When she did so, Robina could scarcely repress a smile, so completely had she transformed herself into a female Quixote. She wore a jockey cap and an old scarlet habit, faced with tarnished gold; her manner was suddenly become swaggering, in keeping with her military attire; and when she mounted, Robina perceived that she wore a top-boot, garnished with a spur.

However Sir Davie seemed to think this attire was nothing *outré*; his eyes expressed, as well as such large goggle eyes could, how lovely he thought Robina—and in high good-humour our party set out.

A pleasant ride, rendered merry by Robina's mirth, brought them to the village. Robina, who had her reasons, insisted on their both dismounting, to help her to choose the silk and beads. Her quick eye promptly reconnoitred

the premises, and close to the door she detected the aperture for the letters.

She was in a fever of impatience; Miranda kept close beside her, and Sir Davie never took his eyes off her watchful and burning face.

At length she said, gently touching his arm: "Come to the door, Sir Davie, and let us compare these shades in the full light." Sir Davie thinking she wanted a *tête-à-tête* with him, gave Miranda a look and a repelling push. She remained at the counter.

"How do you like those shades together, Sir Davie?" said Robina, handing them to him; "do look at them." At that very moment she dropped them at her feet, and while Sir Davie stooped to pick them up, she slipped her letter into the post box, and leaving him to collect the silks, hastened back to Miranda. Her object thus completely effected, Robina soon made her selection, and returned to the Castle. And now, all her anxiety was to get as quickly, and with as little ennui as possible,

through the odious week she had to pass at the Castle. With all she could do, Time seemed almost to stand still—a leaden weight pressed upon her spirits. As if to lengthen days already interminably long, the family breakfasted at seven, and after Robina had once tried the experiment of absenting herself, Miranda made a point of calling her before six, and herself assisting at her toilette.

The elder spinsters, determined to keep her to the workroom, caused the groom to pronounce the horse Robina had ridden, ill; and she did not like to propose going alone with Sir Davie, mounted on Miranda's, because it would seem so entire a sanction of the attentions she wished to avoid. Considering herself plighted to Luxmore, she had delicacy enough to shun all *tête-à-têtes* with Sir Davie, and he being somewhat dull, could *make* no opportunities of speaking to her alone. He would sit for hours watching her as she worked, his lack-lustre eyes fixed intently upon her—adding by his

presence a sense of restraint to the dull monotony of every day, and making her ready to weep with impatience for the time of her departure.

At length it came. Sir Davie, who thought he might have better opportunities of wooing her at Glenlonely, than where some watchful sister or other was ever at hand, did not oppose her departure. The carriage was ordered, and with the wild flutter of an uncaged bird, Robina got ready. To her great dismay, she found at the last moment that Sir Davie intended to escort her. However, she had no power to prevent him; she took a formal leave of the elder sisters, Miranda wept on her bosom, and then Robina sprang into the carriage, and Sir Davie took his seat opposite to her.

Whichever way she looked, she felt she was followed by that huge mask-like face, and that those enormous eyes were fixed upon her. She tried to talk, to laugh, to broach a dozen different subjects—all in vain. Tremendous

sighs, which were almost groans, burst from the herculean breast of Sir Davie. Several times he cleared his voice. "Hem—a hem," he murmured. Robina did not heed. This lasted for some time; at length he slowly extended a gigantic hand and grasped her arm. Robina all but shrieked.

"Miss Mc.Grigor," he said—"Miss Mc. Grigor, ma'am, miss! madam! Robina!" And then with a sort of cry of despair he added, "I love you!"

"Oh, Sir Davie," said Robina, "I hope not."

"You hope not, Robina!" said Sir Davie, roused out of his fears—"and why do you hope not?"

"I scarcely know," faltered Robina, alarmed in her turn, as she saw his large and angry face bent over her.

"I should think not—I suppose you ladies feel shy on these occasions, as even we men do; but this must come to an end—we are na'

bairns to treefie wi' sic motters—Robina, I luve ye, and if I'm na' much mista'en and misinformed, the luve is mutual. Dinna be coy and shy, lassie. Ye need na' be aashamed o' luv'ing Mc.Dougal—you're na' the first—I hae your father's sanction, and mair, the Leddy Mc. Grigor's too. Dinna think I'm na' in earnest, I'm na' wooing ye to jilt ye, Beenie—I mean morriage, and thot promptly, the suner the better, and its yoursel' sall name the day!"

"I think you make very sure, sir, and presume a good deal on my parent's favour before you have made any progress in mine," said Robina, nettled out of her prudence. "You speak as if you thought you were conferring an honour instead of imploring one; but it matters little, since I tell you, once for all, my mind's made up, and neither father, nor mother, nor any earthly power, shall make me listen to your suit."

"But ye must hae kenned the treaty between

your father and me, and why ye were asked to the Castle."

"I could not prevent any silly treaties you might contemplate; it was time enough for me to speak when called on to ratify them; and as to my being asked to the Castle, it's no such great marvel that the daughter of Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor should pass a few days with the sisters of Sir Davie Mc.Dougal."

"Have a care, Miss Mc.Grigor, you'll maybe repent this to your last day—your father's na douce."

"I should repent indeed giving any encouragement to a man who can threaten me with my father."

"Weel, I canna believe yer in earnest."

"And why not?"

This simple question puzzled poor Sir Davie; even he saw the folly of enumerating his own advantages. He sank into a sullen silence, and broke it no more till he arrived at Glenloughly.

Here he proceeded at once to Sir Grigor's study, and Robina rushed upstairs.

She drew the bolt of her door, and sate, her heart beating with terror, for about half an hour; at the end of that time she heard her father's voice, low and husky, demanding admittance. She feared to grant it, and after it had been repeated two or three times, the door was burst open with a madman's fury, and Sir Grigor, livid and shaking with rage, stood in the middle of the room.

At this outrage, however, Robina's Highland spirit rose, and drawing herself up, she said: "I wonder, sir, you should outrage me thus; I am a lady and your daughter, and entitled at least to be treated as a woman!"

"And I wonder," he stammered, his eyes wolfish in their wrath, and a leaden hue spreading over his face, "that you dare provoke me thus."

"How have I provoked you, sir?"

"Have you not rejected the man I have

resolved you shall marry, and in your marrying whom, all my hopes are bound up?"

"Nay, sir, my marriage is a much more important object to myself than to you—my hopes are much more concerned in it than yours can be."

"Silly girl! why will you drive me beyond all patience! you do not, you cannot know, what a blow to me your rejection of Sir David would be."

"And you, sir, cannot know what a death-blow to me an union with him would be."

"Robina!" said her father solemnly, "come for a moment to my study—I have there some papers, some arguments, to show you, which I think you cannot resist."

"Promise I shall not see Sir David there, and I will come."

"I do promise—he is with your mother—and you shall see him only by your own consent."

Robina followed her father. As she entered the room, her eye, following his, lighted on a

pair of pistols on the mantel-piece. She did not like the maniac glare with which he eyed them, her heart grew still, but she said nothing.

At this moment a message came from Sir David Mc.Dougal and Leddy Mc.Grigor, begging to see Sir Grigor immediately for one moment.

"Stay here till my return," he said, in a husky voice—and he left the room.

Quick as thought Robina darted to the mantel-piece—drew the bullets from the pistols—hid them in her pocket—replaced the weapons, and returned to the spot where she had been standing.

In a few moments her father returned.

"Robina!" he said, "I tell you once for all my honour is concerned in your marrying Sir David, my word is given and I cannot survive the ruin and disgrace your refusal will bring upon me."

"Nor can I, sir, survive the misery and despair such a match would entail upon me."

"You are resolved?"

"I am."

"Sir David turned to the door, locked it, and pocketed the key! He seized on one of the pistols, and pointing it at Robina's heart, said: "Will this enforce obedience? Say you consent to be his wife, or I fire! It is loaded, girl!"

"I fear not death," said Robina, drawing herself up—"fire, if you will be a murderer; I would rather be *your* victim than *his* wife!"

"Rash fool!" said her father, laying down the weapon, "I did it but to frighten you; but stay, perhaps if you can brave death yourself, you cannot doom a parent. Now if you will not promise to wed Sir David, I will blow out my brains before you! Speak!"

"Then, again I say, I never can be his!"

Sir Grigor, with a wild hyena laugh, drew

the trigger close to his ear—of course without effect.

“What trickery is this?” he said, trembling from head to foot at his own rash passion; “I wish I had died before you, girl! but since I cannot perish, nor daunt your spirit, listen. Oh, Robina! listen not to my threat, but to my prayer. There, I kneel before you!—I, your father—I, the last of the Mc.Grignons—I kneel to beg my only child not to doom me to ruin, disgrace, despair. Say only you will see Sir David again—say he may hope—and I will molest you no further—speak!” And he crawled on his knees to the spot where she stood, catching her dress convulsively, while over his weather-beaten and time-worn face the tears streamed.

Robina was not proof against this. She burst into tears too, and said: “Rise, papa! how cruel this is! Remember, I promise nothing but that I will see Sir David again, but not to-day.”

"And he may hope?"

"Yes, he may *hope*," faltered Robina.

Sir Grigor rose, kissed his daughter, and hastened upstairs to convey these tidings to Sir David. Robina stole to her own room.

"Yes, he may hope, and hope in vain," said the false one, as she threw herself on her bed. "And now, unless I would doom myself to misery and moping madness—now how more than ever it behoves me to escape—once away, once Luxmore's wife, and they must be resigned. Rash father! would he really have blown out his brains before me? he must have suspected my manœuvre—at any rate when I am gone he will have no one to intimidate, no one on whom to wreak his fiendish passion; and he must be calm, he must be reconciled at last." Sir David Mc.Dougal remained to dinner. Robina pleaded a head-ache, and was excused. Her father came in the evening to wish her good-night and to make her renew her equivocal promise—and after that she saw no one but

her maid, whom she speedily dismissed. But when the universal quiet proclaimed that all in the castle were at rest, Robina, by the light of the moon, distinctly saw the shadow of a man in the plantation under her window.

She waved a white handkerchief, which signal was returned; hastily she made up a parcel of things she thought she should most need, in case, as her heart foretold, Luxmore urged her flight. She then threw a cloak round her, and groped her way in the dark, down-stairs, and into the room (a sort of store-room) beneath her own. Never had the stairs seemed to creak so loud before. For some time, too, her trembling fingers refused to unbar the shutters and the window. How she trembled! the watch-dog barked, and all the dogs on the premises re-echoed that bark. Robina felt inclined to retreat, but at that moment the window opened. Luxmore's voice met her ear, as he whispered: "Angel, are you come at last!"

Gently he lifted her from the window sill to the ground, threw his arm around her, and led her through the plantation. There, as she had half expected, his carriage-and-four appeared in the shade.

"Where would you take me?" she asked.

"To Gretna, beloved," he whispered.

"I trust you then entirely," said Robina.

"As I hope for heaven, you may do so," he said.

He lifted her half-fainting form into the carriage, and sprang in after her. Robina's head sank on his shoulder.

"Bless you, my darling, my wife," he whispered. And when they had passed out of the Glenlonely estate, emerging from the shades they had hitherto courted, they met the most silver of moonlights. Robina saw that her lover's cheek was pale as that of the dead, and she felt his tears trickle into her bosom.

CHAPTER VI.

GREYNA.

It was over—they were wedded. The disobedient and runaway daughter rose from her knees, Luxmore's adored wife! Feminine and physical weakness supplied the place of real sensibility, and her tears and her trembling hand convinced her husband that it was not that filial duty was weak, but that devotion to him was strong; and as the old ballad says, that "Love would still be lord of all."

It was perhaps the first time that a man of Luxmore's wealth, position, and expectancies,

had found it necessary to carry to Greyna's clandestine altar, a girl without a sixpence. The old blacksmith, who at that time really officiated, and forged himself those fetters which, however daintily hidden in roses and concealed by down and silk, are still found to be iron fetters beneath, (should their rosy and silken coverings ever wear away)—he could not at all understand the romance of this pair.

He had been used to bind gay and blooming Ensigns, sometimes to silly heiresses in their teens, sometimes to sillier women of fortune in their *ties*. He had knit together showy middle-aged men of fashion and of autumnal beauty, with school girls of weak minds; and he had often joined young people, rich in every grace and charm, and richer still in wild, devoted, and exclusive love, but whom for some worldly reason or other, 'foes' under the name of 'friends' would fain have severed. But here he saw a middle-aged, lame, though elegant and interesting man, evidently of family and fortune,

and a girl in beauty's richest bloom, but who had, as his experience taught him, in his own language, "all her wits about her."

However, he had no time and little inclination to ponder on the mystery. His whole life was made up of the last scene, of the last act of the tragedy or comedy of life (as it might prove); *dénouements* were nothing to him; his fee was his object. Luxmore took care that this should make his eyes sparkle; and he had hardly time to thank the liberal bridegroom, before a post-chaise dashed up at a furious rate, and a young dandy handed out the hump-backed heiress of a city *Millionaire*; and as pursuit was hot after them, the blacksmith had not a moment to lose. Nor did the enraptured Luxmore wish to tarry. All his desire was to convey to some secluded and fairy-home, the being his own fancy invested with all that could make Beauty and Youth an object of such idolatry to such a man.

Robina had hoped that Edinburgh or

London, or at any rate some gay watering-place, would have been the scene of her honeymoon. However, she had tact enough not to betray any disappointment. "A month," she said to herself, "will soon pass away, however dull it may be, and then Luxmore must learn that I have a will of my own."

But Luxmore's thoughts, how widely different! As he secured, for this to him brief Moon of bliss, a little exquisite cottage home on the banks of one of the loveliest of the lakes of the North of England—he felt sure that his Robina, as well as himself, would never be able to leave it till thrice that moon had changed, nor even then perhaps, until they were chased by "winter and rough weather."

As Robina's personal charms were real and fascinating, and she had tact and cunning not to unveil her mental and moral defects, Mr. Luxmore was still deceived, and in that deception blest! Certainly there were not in his young Bride's manner, conversation, or con-

duct, the almost officious, encroaching, and exacting devotion of real love; but perhaps from that very circumstance she was enabled to *appear* more fascinating, and to amuse her husband and enliven her home the more. True love is so watchful, particularly in woman; it is, even in its happiest mood, a half melancholy feeling; a wearing jealousy ever hovers near it; its language is monotonous as that of the waves wooing the beach, and its looks are not Beauty's brilliant and bright ones, but drooping, wan, and worn with its own wild excess.

Even to the lover, it is not the woman who loves most wildly and most deeply, who seems the most tender and the most winning. And thus Robina appeared perhaps more fond, more trusting, and more bewitching, than she could have done, had she loved with the love of poor Luxmore himself.

How little did he guess, while time flew by for him on rosy wings, that she was counting every day to the close of that month, at which

she had resolved, by some means or other, to escape from the to her intolerable ennui, or as the French call it more expressively still, the *lourdeur* of her secluded life. Mornings spent in rowing on the still lake, whose waveless calm almost provoked her—rambles hand-in-hand with him, through scenery which awakened ecstasy in the impassioned Luxmore, and which had no real charm for her, (well as she learnt to feign a corresponding rapture)—evenings devoted to poetry, for which she had nor ear, nor taste, nor soul, but which Luxmore, who read it as none but a poet reads, made the sweet interpreter of his own passion. To Robina there was little charm in the lovely bouquet she found daily on her toilet, and the tribute of verses, full of genius and passion, with which her lover-husband constantly accompanied it. Alas! alas! to her it was a daily bore even to read it attentively enough to be able to comment on it to him!

It was about this time, that Luxmore's high

sense of honour and generous sympathy with every human creature, began to upbraid him for his clandestine marriage, and the anguish it must have cost his loved one's parents. It was a feeling he did not encourage, he tried to conquer it; he knew not whence or why it came; but it did come. In vain he repeated to himself, that by no other means could he have obtained Robina—that her father's conduct was cruel, harsh, unjustifiable—that nothing would have won or could have softened him. The happier he felt in the possession of (as he thought) the gentle, tender, endearing Robina, the more he felt for the parents from whom he had stolen her—and the more fervently he wished by some signal service to restore himself and Robina to their favour, and to enable them again to enjoy what he fancied must be the unspeakable comfort of her society and her love. To his own sensitive and conscientious mind he began to appear the triumphant injurer, and he longed to atone. In his long conversations with

Robina, he had discovered, (for in such conversations even the cunning always let fall more than they intend) he had discovered, we say, enough to convince him that pecuniary obligation to Sir David McDougal, and the mania of speculation, had caused his rejection of his (Luxmore's) suit, and his resolution to sacrifice his daughter to another. Once clear on this point, his mind was made up. He would take Robina to Glenlonely—he would implore the bereaved parents to forgive—he would convince them they had gained a son, not lost a daughter—and once on terms to broach so delicate a subject, he would compel his father-in-law to allow him to free him from all pecuniary obligation to Sir David; and unless his speculations were of a dangerous and hopeless kind, he would enforce his accepting whatever he coveted towards making them answer.

Robina turned a little pale at the thought of Glenlonely, and the dreadful Sir Grigor, but she longed for change, and felt very curious to

know how her parents and her late braw wooer, with his strange sisters, had endured her flight. Anything, on the morning upon which Luxmore proposed this step—anything seemed to her preferable to a day of poetry at home; and such it would have been, for a drizzling rain fell.

“You will protect me, dearest?” she said, throwing herself into his arms—“you will not let them hurt me?”

“My darling! are you not my wife? Who dares even to offend you now?”

Robina was soon ready. Luxmore’s carriage-and-four bore them rapidly along. It still rained heavily, as they entered the gates of Glenlonely.

“How very dreary it seems!” said Robina.

“Cheer up, love—all will be bright soon.”

At that moment a funeral procession came in view. It proceeded from the hall, and was moving towards the church. Robina screamed.

“Oh God!” she cried.

"Fear not, dearest!" said Luxmore; "it can be no one you know or love. Let us get out—we will inquire of one of the followers."

Robina alighted—*she* was pale, but Luxmore's face was ghastly.

"Whose funeral is that?" he asked, (advancing before Robina) in a low husky voice, of a kind who was passing.

"Wha's? why Sir Grigor's—hae ye na' heard he mad awa' with himsel a week syne?"

Luxmore's precaution had failed; Robina heard, and before he could reach her, she fell fainting on the ground.

CHAPTER VII.

A HUSBAND'S LOVE.

Yes, there lay Robina, lifeless at his feet, and her husband's impulse would have been to sink beside her, and yield to his repentant anguish; but he felt that he must support, console, uphold, and guide her—that he was a husband, and that he must defend her (his own) against the world; and so he aroused all his energies, lifted her into the carriage, sprang in beside her, ordered the post-boy to return to the village, alighted at the 'Mc.Dougal Arms,' carrying into the little parlour, Robina, who

was just recovering, laid her on a sofa, and began to ponder on the course he had best pursue.

In an exaggerated sense of her distress, he in a great measure lost sight of his own, which was in reality the deeper and the more durable feeling. A daughter's instinct was busy at her heart, but at his were all the refinements of a most fastidious and delicate conscience.

Robina, on recovering from her swoon, burst into a passion of tears, and in the sudden and unbearable distress of her heart, she failed not to accuse and reproach poor Luxmore as the cause of her sufferings. But when did a little mind and narrow heart ever prompt a nobler line of conduct? Luxmore was distracted; he knelt beside her, he implored her pardon, he bathed her hands with his tears, he entreated her to tell him what she wished him to do.

"I will do it, beloved, to give you a moment's peace, whatever it may cost me?"

"Well then," said Robina, "go and learn the particulars of this dreadful secret, try to see my mother, and find out whether any assistance your means may enable you to offer, can save her one pang, or secure my poor father's memory from any insult or reproach. See if she will receive me, for I cannot venture to the house, only to be driven thence."

Robina in her excitement, which forbade her wonted caution, did not see that she was exposing her poor sensitive Luxmore to all she shrank from herself.

"Alas!" he said, "I will brave all and go; but how can I leave you alone in such a state!"

"I shall be better alone just now—do go! it is all you can do to atone and to comfort me."

Luxmore went.

It was some hours before he returned, and Robina had had ample time to repent having sent so devoted a comforter from her side, and to long with the wildest impatience for his return. Her solitude had been haunted by

every horrid image connected with her father's violent and dreadful death—with torturing self-reproach—and finally, as the shades of evening closed around her, with superstitious terrors connected with that vague half-belief in ghosts, which even the wisest cannot quite control, and to which Robina weakly yielded, as on her knees, her face hidden in the sofa cushions, and fearing to look round, she trembled so that the uneven floor and rickety furniture shook beneath her.

It was in this state Luxmore found her, and to his heart her situation denoted the daughter's penitent anguish, not the woman's cowardice. She was sensible of his approach directly he entered the room, but it was some time before he could induce her to turn her face towards him, though he knelt by her side, and putting his arm round her waist, clasped her sobbing as she was to his bosom.

“And you have been alone all this dreary

time, my love!" he said, "and no fire, no light, no comfort!"

"Ah, dearest," she said at length, "what can comfort me now!"

"I can, my own darling."

"Is it not true then?" she asked, almost wildly.

"Alas! my love, it is true that your poor father is no more; but from all I can learn, your flight had little or nothing to do with his dreadful end. It seems he has long been engaged in the rashest and maddest of speculations, and those who know him best assert, that the failure of his last venture upset his reason and caused this horrible catastrophe."

"Have you seen my mother?"

"I have, after waiting very long, and in great misery, Robina."

"And will she see me?"

"Not just at present; but she has allowed me to relieve her from some present difficulty, and to rescue your poor father's memory from

some reproach. It seems to me, my love, that her anger against you is not so much connected with your father, as that she considers your flight a personal affront to herself. Her maternal dignity seems wounded, but not irreparably I am sure ; and though indeed, dearest, I had much to bear, still I think I have won upon her so far, that she will allow me to aid, to counsel, and to comfort her, and that in time she will forgive you, and perhaps take up her abode with us."

"Did you see Sir Davie Mc.Dougal?"

"I did. Ah, Robina, he is a fine creature—I wonder I can have succeeded where he failed."

"Then he was not insulting or bitter?"

"No, at first he was very cold and proud, but when he saw my distress and heard my story, heard how I loved, nay worshipped you, Robina, and how we had been affianced and severed, he unbent—he even seemed to me to

weep, and through him and his influence it was I obtained an interview with your mother."

"It seems," said Robina, bitterly, "in all this, I am the scape-goat—I am the sacrifice—I the wretch, the unnatural wretch, a mother will not look upon."

And she burst into a passion of tears, in which bad temper and a sense of present discomfort had more to do than grief.

But Luxmore knew not this; he did all he could to soothe, what he believed to be her filial anguish, and tried by every expression of love and hope, and every promise his fond heart could suggest, to atone to her for the sorrow he had brought upon her.

In his passionate ejaculations, two points struck Robina—the one his reiterated assertions that her father's dreadful end was not caused by her; and the other, that he wished her to propose any plan by which her mind could be diverted from its present despair, and her thoughts drawn from a torturing but mistaken

remorse. Robina did not appear to heed his words, but they sunk into her heart.

"What shall we do now?" he said, "my darling," as she wept herself into a sort of sobbing calm on his bosom.

"Do with me what you will," she said: "I feel all your kindness, though just now I cannot repay it. If indeed there is no hope of my mother's seeing me, let us go home."

"We will go home, my sweet one!" said Luxmore, with the first feeling of comfort he had known that day. Alas! he fancied Robina loved that home as he did.

As she refused all refreshment, and seemed eager to depart, they were soon on their way to the little abode which Love made a bower of roses to the one, and Indifference a detested cottage to the other.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOVER-HUSBAND.

The shock Robina had sustained, and the remorse she involuntarily felt, (and was most impatient of feeling) acting upon an excitable temperament and a somewhat delicate frame, brought on a low fever, which filled the husband's heart with terror, and stretched the once blooming and joyous bride languid and listless on her couch.

An accidental circumstance had revealed to her all the horrid details of her father's fate, (which Luxmore had carefully concealed from

her) and Robina was the sort of person who could resign herself to a father's violent death, but sicken and pine over the details of its horrors.

One day while roaming in listless *ennui* through the rooms of her cottage-home, Robina entered the library, and mechanically opened a newspaper she found on the table. Her colour rose to her temples, and, receding, left her wan as the Dead. On opening the journal, a paragraph, containing the horrible account of her father's violent death, had caught her eye, and she felt impelled to read it through, though her heart stood still the while. . It ran thus.

"Horrible suicide of Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor of Grigor." "The neighbourhood of Glenlonely has been thrown into a state of great horror and dismay by a determined act of self-destruction, committed by Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor of Grigor, Bart., and of which the details are as follows. On Friday morning Sir Grigor, who was an early riser, not appearing as usual at

the breakfast hour, one of his servants went to call him, and while proceeding to his apartment, was alarmed to see a stream of blood issuing from under the door of the Baronet's bed-room. He immediately summoned assistance, and with the aid of a fellow servant forced open the door, which was locked on the inside. The body of the unfortunate gentleman had fallen against it, and his person presented a most ghastly and hideous spectacle. It appeared that he had held a loaded pistol to each ear, and firing both at the same moment, had blown his head and face literally to atoms; the walls were splashed with blood and brains, and no trace of a human face was left. At the inquest which took place the next day, it appeared that Sir Grigor had been moody and strange in his manner, ever since the elopement of his only daughter with the wealthy Mr. Luxmore of Luxmore Hall—he, Sir Grigor, having set his heart on another match for his daughter, with a friend of his own. At an early hour he retired to rest; but

as no report was heard, it is presumed he did not commit the rash and fatal act till the whole household were asleep. Some of the servants heard him, (as they passed his apartment, on their way to their own rooms at midnight,) pacing hurriedly up and down his chamber, and one distinctly heard him groan repeatedly and heavily, as if in great mental agony. A verdict of temporary insanity was returned. Lady Mc.Grigor keeps her room perfectly disconsolate, and the unhappy and imprudent cause of a parent's destruction has, we hear, vainly sought admittance to the widowed mourner. Her feelings can be better imagined than described. Another rumour states that Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor, of Grigor, had recently speculated to a large and ruinous amount in the — shares, and that to this, and not to his daughter's disobedience, his rash act may be attributed. Be it as it may, Scotland has lost one of its few remaining old Lairds, the Baro-

netcy one of its oldest members, Society one of its greatest ornaments, the poor a friend, and the rich a pattern."

With distended eyes, lips apart, and a brow on which the cold drops of horror came slowly out, Robina read the dreadful account! Then rushed back upon her heart, all of love she had ever felt for her poor father—the paper she had tightly clutched fell from her cold hand—everything seemed to swim around her—and when the lover-husband, who seldom could bear her half-an-hour from his sight, came in search of her, he found her stretched lifeless on the library floor!

After this dreadful shock, Robina became worse, her fever increased, she constantly called upon her father, and went through the horrid details she had read in the paper, which poor Luxmore loathed himself for not having destroyed. His watchful agony knew no bounds; he never left her; no mother ever tended her first-born, in its first danger, as he

did, the darling of his heart. Medical men of eminence were summoned from all parts; and though in the 'Counsel of many' there is wisdom, yet as 'Doctors will disagree,' and (who shall decide when they do so disagree), is a query become proverbial—the husband found himself perplexed rather than comforted—encumbered rather than assisted.

In a state of unspeakable excitement and distress, on one evening, when his own fears had magnified every evil symptom, and created many that did not exist, as he watched his young wife by the gloomy light of a foggy autumnal twilight; and after a doctor, whose advice had *not* been followed, had retired, launching thunderbolts of wrath at his rival Galen's head, and darkly hinting at what seemed to the excited husband to be the speedy decease of the young and idolized Robina—Luxmore, half frenzied with alarm, and the reproaches of his over-sensitive conscience, despatched to Glenlonely an earnest, nay, a

passionate supplication to Lady Mc.Grigor, to come to her suffering child. The letter breathed the humility of despair and self-reproach, and it was positively blotted and blistered with Luxmore's tears. He counted the hours, nay, the minutes, till his despatch could return; and as Robina, (in a delirium caused by opiates, which one doctor had administered, and loss of blood, which another had enforced), called frequently on her mother's name, the husband ventured to hope that the arrival of that mother would comfort and restore her child, and that she would fly to his darling's bedside with healing on her wings.

It was then a bitter and heart-sickening disappointment to the sensitive and anxious husband, when, after a very long and to him inexplicable delay, the messenger and carriage he had despatched for Lady Mc.Grigor returned—the former with letters only—the latter empty.

Eagerly Mr. Luxmore tore open Lady Mc.

Grigor's letter ; in an old-fashioned hand was written.

Glenlonely.

SIR,

I am surprised that you should expect me to quit my present seclusion for any purpose, or under any circumstances whatever. I beg to assure you it is quite out of the question, even were my mourning arrived, which it is not. I doubt not your fears exaggerate Mrs. Luxmore's danger; grief is very slow to destroy, else I should not be still in this sublunary world. True, Mrs. Luxmore's sorrow *must* be embittered by remorse, while in *mine* I have the blessing of *entire self-approval*; and when disposed most to lament Sir Grigor's sudden and dreadful fate, I console myself with the happy reflection of the long years of unspeakable comfort he enjoyed with me, and the conviction that I was to him the best and most exemplary of wives ! Indeed, I little deserved

at his hands to be left with ruined fortunes, and a name blighted by his unhappy deed, to battle with a cold world, and to be obliged to accept from *you*, sir, that assistance, which of course you offer in atonement for the injury you have done *me*. All the pecuniary arrangements you proposed to Sir Davie Mc.Dougal have been carried into effect, and that gentleman (though the injured party) has vied with you, the *injurer*, in sparing me all trouble and annoyance. As soon as my health and spirits permit, and my mourning arrives from London, I shall repair to Edinburgh, there to pass the winter at least, and Miss Miranda Mc.Dougal, will bear me company—partly perhaps for my sake, but chiefly for her own, as it is seldom such chaperonage is to be had for any single woman.

I shall be glad of a line when Mrs. Luxmore begins to mend; and am, sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

ROBINA Mc.GRIGOR OF GRIGOR.

Thoroughly disgusted with this most heartless and egotistical reply to his imploring and remorseful letter, Mr. Luxmore threw it into the fire, and opened another large and important looking epistle, sealed with a huge coat of arms : it was directed to himself. It contained a letter to Mrs. Luxmore, and in the envelope were written, addressed to Mr. Luxmore, the following lines.

Mc.Dougal Castle.

SIR,

I have ventured to write to Mrs. Luxmore, because I think what I have to say may be of some comfort to her, in her present great affliction. I hear with much distress from your servant that his mistress is dangerously ill, and that you have sent for Lady Mc.Grigor. I know her Ladyship will not attend your summons ; but if any one of my sisters could be of any comfort to you, or Mrs. Luxmore, at this

time of illness and sorrow, they beg me say they would rejoice to wait on you.

As for myself, I need scarcely add that anything I can do, in any way, to comfort or help you, I will, though much mental distress has brought on an attack of my old hereditary foe, the gout.

I think my letter to Mrs. Luxmore will put things in a new light, for she knows, whatever other faults and foibles I may have, that falsehood is not one of them, and that truth is the dear delight of, yours truly,

DAVID McDOUGAL OF DOUGAL.

There was something in this manly and simple letter from a disappointed rival, and rejected lover, which sent the soft tears to Luxmore's eyes, and eagerly he watched Robina's slumber, in the hope that when she awoke, she might be equal to the perusal of Sir David's letter.

He was right—about dawn she opened her

eyes, and met his, full of anxious love, intently fixed upon her.

"Arthur!" she murmured, "dear kind Arthur!" and she stretched out her wan hand to him, "why are you up?"

"How could I rest, my darling? are you better, at all better?"

"Yes, I am better—how long have I been ill?"

"I will tell you all about that another time; now let me give you some tea, and see if you can compose yourself to sleep again."

With a watchful care more like a mother's than that of any other nurse, the husband administered the first refreshment she had voluntarily taken, or seemed the least to enjoy. His beautiful and eloquent eyes, so darkly bright, and forming so glorious a contrast with his high pale brow, and his wan cheek—watched with passionate delight every morsel she took from his trembling hand—every

draught she imbibed of the cup he held to her lips.

At length, to his ineffable delight, her head sank heavily back on the hand with which he supported it, and her eyelids gently closed.

"Dear Arthur!" she gently murmured; a soft moisture came out on her hitherto fevered forehead and hands, and in a few moments her deep and regular breathing announced she was in a sweet natural slumber. Inwardly blessing and thanking God, the husband sank on a seat beside her bed, his wearied head dropped upon her pillow, and he slept a sweet and dreamless sleep, till the bright noon-day sun looked into the room.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RECOVERY.

Robina was the first to wake, which she did very much refreshed, though languid and weak.

Mr. Luxmore's first object was to ascertain whether she was equal to the task of reading, what he felt sure must be the words of comfort Sir David had addressed to her.

"Read it to me, dearest Arthur," she said.

And with a faltering voice, he read as follows.

MADAM,

Do not fear to peruse this first and last effusion from a disappointed man. I promise you it shall contain nothing but what will comfort rather than distress you. The love I once bore you was (whatever my uncouth way of showing it might make it appear) no selfish feeling, and even now I should be consoled for my own distress if I could in aught alleviate yours.

First then, do not nourish in your young and sensitive breast that undying serpent, a causeless remorse. *Your marriage was not the cause of your father's sad fate.* I, who well knew all his affairs—I, who was his most intimate associate—I assure you, on my honour as a gentleman and a Mc.Dougal, that had you deigned to fulfil his wishes in the disposal of your hand, the result would have been the same. Dangerous, extensive, private, and most ruinous speculations, bringing to poverty, one whose proud spirit coveted above all things the

world's respect, and the reputation of wealth—these, and these only, caused that desperation, under the influence of which the fatal deed was done. No power could have checked your poor father's career of mad hope, and mad despair, and therefore none could have averted his doom. His whole soul was embarked in these private and ruinous speculations, and the sacrifice of your happiness (had you made it) would not have prevented that of his life.

I can say no more on this harrowing subject ; I still feel an interest in you, Madam, which compels me to rejoice that the partner you have chosen is worthy of so great a prize.

If I mistake not, his love equals what mine would have been, while his merits far surpass any I could ever hope to possess, even had I been then, what disappointment in the only real attachment I ever formed, has made me now, as humble and self-doubting, as I fear I was once inconsiderate, arrogant, and egotistical.

Let the good and generous Mr. Luxmore, in pride and peace, wear then the jewel of the world—I will not envy him, while in undimmed lustre he keeps it next his heart. If I can ever serve him or you, command me ; and if any one of my sisters can comfort you in this your hour of sickness and sorrow, you have only to summon her.

Your devoted servant,

DAVID Mc.DUGAL OF DOUGAL.

Robina's nerves, weakened by recent illness, could not resist the unexpected and touching devotion of this letter. She wept bitterly, and her husband's eyes were moist when he concluded the perusal.

“Do not regret your choice yet, my love!” he said, half jealous of the tears which trickled silently down Robina's pale cheek, and fell upon her pillow. “I must yield to your poor rejected suitor in all that charms most maidens' eyes, and wins their hearts ; but in all the soft

most prizes, watchful love, and all devoted care, in that I will not yield even to him, for I feel if he loved you much, I love you more."

Robina extended her fair and now thin hand; she closed her eyes as if to sleep, but in reality to ponder on the comfort Sir David's letter contained for the distressed daughter—and the grateful incense it offered (and which now she was sufficiently relieved at heart to enjoy) to the vain woman. Not only she readily believed Sir David's assertion, that her marriage was not the cause of her father's dreadful act, (and that conviction took an unbearable load from her heart); but she felt too that she might, without appearing heartless or inconsistent, give up the miserable task of perpetual mourning, and in a short time, driving from her thoughts the late dreadful tragedy, prepare to enjoy a little of the delight the world offers to youth, beauty, and wealth.

She resolved that her first step should be, to effect a removal from her present, to her,

odious and monotonous seclusion. She knew her fond husband well enough to be sure, a wish, if once expressed, would be enough; but then she wanted so to express this wish, that she might lose nothing in his eyes, either as a daughter or a wife.

Deceived by her silence, and closed eye-lids, the delighted husband thought she slept, and she was willing he should think so. Noiselessly he stole on tip-toe to the window, and gently as a mother for a sick and only darling, he excluded the light.

Poor Luxmore! his heart was so full, he longed to be where he could give vent to his emotions without disturbing her by any agitation, and without the risk of meeting the cold, strange eyes of the menials, who every now and then came in, on any pretext that could conceal their real object—the gratification of a low curiosity.

“Bless you, sweet wife!” he gently murmured, as he passed the dissembler’s bed, and

passed from the dark room into the bright sunshine of an autumn noon—a sunshine that no longer seemed to mock him, for his heart was full of hope and joy.

Yes, at that moment, he, the Deceived, the Unloved, was happier than Robina, the Adored, but the Deceiver. The Unselfish, the Confiding, and the True, have sources of joy unknown to the Vain, the Artful, and the False—and Luxmore, trusting in, believing in, and doating on Robina—Luxmore, at thirty-nine, crippled in form, feeble in health, plain in person, and acutely sensible of all his own disadvantages—nay, in his own sensitive and humble nature, exaggerating them to himself—he at that moment *was* happier than the young, the radiant Robina, full of confidence in herself, admired by all, and adored by her husband.

After an hour spent in passionate musings on his own imaginary bliss and in grateful contemplation of his ideal treasure, glad at heart as a

bird or as a child, he began to cull a choice bouquet for his darling, of all the flowers that still lingered in his garden, like love in his heart—and while he, like Medora, “pleased but perplexed, guessed at such as seemed the fairest”—Robina’s plotting head tossed on her feverish pillow, and she devised a plan for quitting her secluded home, and entering by degrees on the pleasures and vanities of the world.

CHAPTER X.

DOUBTS AND FEARS.

With a heart not merely relieved from a weight of remorse, but lightened of the necessity of assuming its semblance, and appearing inconsolable, Robina speedily rallied—and artfully managed, while yet her looks were wan, and her strength impaired, to convey to her anxious husband's mind a fear, that in the spot where she had suffered so much anguish, and received such a shock, she would never recover her radiant bloom and buoyant spirits.

She contrived after some weeks of ennui, to

which she gave an air of despondency, and discontent which she managed to pass off for sorrow, that Mr. Luxmore himself should propose a removal to new and livelier scenes.

The reluctance she feigned, was easily overruled, but in the whole affair Robina realized Pope's *beau ideal* of a good wife, who

“ Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
And has her humour most when she obeys.”

Having once decided on sacrificing self, and the, to him, rapturous, because sole enjoyment of his darling's society, Luxmore lost no time in making all necessary preparations for a removal from what to him was the Eden of his heart. Jealous and watchful love could not but discover through all the adroit assumption of regret, that gladness sparkled in Robina's eyes at the prospect of this change. The rose returned to her cheek, the lightness to her step, and when off her guard, the wonted smile played about her lips.

Luxmore felt a vague and jealous anguish as he marked it, but distrusting not only the feeling itself, but while under its influence, any action its morbid restlessness might prompt, he entered into the bustle of preparation with apparent pleasure, and by appearing himself delighted at the prospect of leaving Mossdale, he beguiled Robina (cunning and guarded as she was) of a confession of her own boundless satisfaction at the approaching change, and her impatience of any delay.

In Arthur Luxmore's case, as in most others, the old proverb was verified, "honesty" would indeed have been "the best policy." He was a novice at deception, and this his first *ruse*, (successful as it was) what were its fruits? Humiliation, self-disparagement, and the first bitter foretaste of disappointed love, and feverish jealousy. Still the tears he could not quite repress, were shed in private, and his young wife did not love him well enough to detect their traces.

Luxmore, in his own distress, did not forget the woes of others ; he remembered poor Eva Morris, and the promise he had made her. He mentioned the subject to Robina, and felt too sure of her delightful acquiescence even to notice her hesitation, and the involuntary coldness of her reply. Robina at first indeed felt only a jealous fear, lest so pretty and accomplished a companion, should share in any degree, the admiration she wished to monopolize ; but a glance at the mirror re-assured her, she was too like all girls brought up at school, very dependent on female companionship, and anticipated no small pride and triumph in showing all her grandeur and power to one who had known nothing herself but dependence and subjection. Then, as none are all evil, she did feel some little satisfaction, at the thought of changing Eva's life, from one of ceaseless toil to one of varied pleasure, but even that amiable impulse was not without the

selfish alloy of a wish to be a patroness, and to be praised and thanked.

Luxmore's heart was too full of love and jealousy, (engrossing inmates of any heart, but particularly of his) to notice that it was only on reflection she seemed gratified by his arrangement, and shortly after he left her to superintend the packing up of her finery, while he went out as he said on business—the usual business of those who love “not wisely but too well”—namely, to wear out their true and priceless hearts for false and worthless idols.

Poor Luxmore! he began to suspect, for the first time, that he was not loved, at least not with a deep and passionate devotion. He did not even dream of the, to him, terrible truth, that he had never been loved at all, but he feared he had never been loved entirely, and that he was now loved less than at first.

“How shall I win her back to her first tenderness?” he said; “what can I do? how have I been wanting? Can I be more watchful,

more devoted? No, no, I cannot be young and beautiful as herself, and every day I grow older and less endearing. Why did I bind her to me? was it not cruel? And ah! if this deep dejection and anxious watchful fear should make me less amiable even than of yore! Already my wretched heart has harboured resentment—resentment against Robina! How can I wish her to forego all the tastes and pleasures of her age? What am I, that she should live for me alone? Shall I degenerate into the odious, jealous tyrant of a young wife—and such a wife!—forbid it, Heaven!—no, no, she does love me! and I am an exacting fool, and I will compel her to be gay and happy, and enjoy all life's choicest pleasures; I will cease to be so selfish in my love, and she will love me better. She does love me now—and she shall love me better still!

CHAPTER XI.

GROWING OLD.

Robina, still weak from recent illness, exerted herself so much to prepare for her departure from Mossgrove, that she brought on a serious relapse, and six weeks more passed heavily away before it was thought safe for her to run the risk of the excitement and fatigue of travelling.

Six weeks had indeed changed the scene around her; a rich and lingering autumn had merged into a cold and dreary winter.

Mr. Luxmore had taken advantage of the

delay to have his Town house refurnished in the most costly, elegant, and modern style, for his still idolized bride ; and his mind, divided between her sick-room and the palace-home he was preparing for her, had no time to prey upon itself.

To enliven her convalescence, he had procured all the best written of the then modern novels, and though he had no taste for such reading himself, and it was fraught with mortification to his sensitive heart, (for all the heroes he read of, were young and handsome,) he conquered his own distress and ennui, and read on hour after hour, delighted to be even the means of cheating Robina of the weariness of solitude, and repaid if her eyes sparkled and her cheeks flushed at a tale of woman's love—the passionate love of those well matched in beauty, youth, and feelings.

And during this seclusion Luxmore was not unhappy. Robina, languid from illness, and dependent on his attention for all comfort and

amusement, was kind, and even in manner, fond, she bore up wonderfully, but only in anticipation of the time when she should leave Mossdale, and exchange its monotonous seclusion for a brilliant abode, decked beyond her most sanguine wishes, and at the beginning of a London season.

At length the time came, so longed for by the wife, so dreaded by the husband. It was the morning of their departure; a drizzling rain fell, and a heavy mist shed its gloom and discomfort over the scene. The garden, so gay and blooming, when she first saw it, was desolate now—the flowers all dead, and the paths and lawn covered with wet and fallen leaves. Robina was not quite ready, and Luxmore, while awaiting her in the breakfast-room, sick at heart, and impatient of confinement, threw open the glass door of the room and strolled out into the grounds, heedless of the wet paths and falling showers.

It was his birth-day, a day which is only a holiday in very early youth.

“ When first our scanty years are told
It seems like pastime to grow old.”

So sings Erin's exquisite poet, and so we have all felt; but the time soon comes, when every birth-day reminds us, that we have not gained a year, (as we think in childhood) but lost one irrecoverably and for ever. Every year after twenty must steal away some outward grace, some inward source of thoughtless youthful happiness. It may not be apparent to others, but it is well known to ourselves. We may *look* the same to others, but we *know* we are the same no more.

And if few can really welcome the birth-day which brings them nearer to old age, to Death, and (awful thought!) to Eternity—if almost all are more ready to weep for the gladness and the graces they lose, than to rejoice at the experience and the wisdom they gain, no wonder

that Luxmore, the middle-aged husband of a wife, not eighteen, felt that the birth-day which made him a year older in his own eyes, if not in hers, was rather a day of mourning than of joy to his heart. By wedding himself to one so young, he had made his own age doubly burdensome to him. He could not bear to seem old to Robina—he could not endure that she should think him old—he must then rejuvenise his tastes, assume the habits, court the society, of youth—he must not reflect and repose, for the young are all action and all unrest. A young man might do what Luxmore felt he dare not—he must not risk Robina's thinking him too old for her. Poor Luxmore! what care he took to prevent her even suspecting, what she, alas! knew so well.

What a restless, useless undertaking! Well has the poet said:—

“ Qui n'a pas l'esprit de son âge
De son âge a tout le tourment.”

And this was Luxmore's case indeed!

His life had not been a happy one! Its morning early darkened by sickness and suffering, had been rendered more gloomy still by Dependence and even Poverty. Delicate in health, somewhat crippled in form, poor in circumstances, but most sensitive in mind and susceptible in heart, he had loved and been slighted—slighted by her he loved with boyhood's rash, romantic love, and shunned and scorned as a detrimental, by all daughters and all mammas. When a succession of most unexpected and even improbable events, placed him in the possession of eight thousand a year, and made him heir to an Earldom, both mothers and daughters suddenly discovered that he, who was an odious bore at twenty-nine, was at thirty the most delightful of men.

His eyes, his teeth, his smile, his forehead, his hand, all were eagerly and eloquently extolled by anxious mothers to attentive daughters; and perhaps Arthur Luxmore, who had that simplicity of heart which generally accompanies

a noble mind, might have been deceived by the change, had it not been for the unwelcome but beneficial interference of Colonel Dunkeld—who took care to point out to him, why, (in his own rude but expressive language) “Dowagers extended warm hands instead of turning cold shoulders, and Misses at his approach looked down on the ground, instead of looking down upon him.”

But though every birth-day of Arthur Luxmore’s joyless life, had been more or less a day of mournful retrospect and gloomy foreboding, this the first he had passed since his every wish had seemed to him realized, was in reality the most depressing.

Till he was married to the young Robina, he had never been ashamed of his age—never afraid that another should know that he was growing old. This seemed to him too, in his present excited state, a birth-day that added more than a year to the disparity between them. On this day he was forty; forty seems so much

older than thirty-nine. He had accustomed himself when in good spirits to the union of seventeen and thirty-nine—but seventeen and forty! He quite dreaded that Robina should know, that solid, unromantic, middle-aged forty now claimed Luxmore as his own.

“*Je compte encore par vingt,*” said a French woman, till her thirtieth birth-day had actually struck its knell to her ear—“*Je compte encore par vingt*”—she *could* not tell the truth, and *would* not positively falsify. And Luxmore had felt, (so puerile does passion make the wisest) like that French coquette—

“*Je compte encore par trente.*”

He had thought if he had not said it, and now he knows that the barrier is passed, and that he is henceforth forty!

He began for the first time almost to regret his rash and ill-assorted match. But for Robina, he would have felt comfort in the thought that he was growing old, and had reached one stage

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more of a tedious journey; but now every thought connected with this day was mortifying, and his heart sank within him, as he heard Robina's young voice calling him playfully, and perceived, (nervously hiding the while) that she was tripping along the wet grass in search of him.

"She is glad and gay," he thought, "because we go hence, and others are to be to her, what I can never be; a source of sufficing happiness and pleasure."

He dashed away a tear, called up a melancholy smile, which played over his pale features, like moonlight over a ruin, and then he hastened tenderly to chide her for coming out in the wet, and arm-in-arm they returned together to the house.

But Luxmore's gloom soon yielded to Robina's playful fondness, and was exchanged for a new, a strange, and thrilling delight, while she whispered a secret purposely withheld till this (to her) day of fête. Yes; with many a coy

delay, with a little natural, and much assumed timidity, and after having almost alarmed her idolizing husband by her mystery, her blushes and tears, (which she had at will) Robina, hiding her face in Luxmore's bosom, murmured in words that awoke a thousand new and rapturous sensations in his devoted heart, that she should perhaps some day be the happy mother of one, who would at once share and increase his love, and be the inheritor, she hoped, of all his goodness, all his virtues!

Even Robina herself was not prepared for the delight, the ecstasy, with which the lover-husband received this unexpected intelligence; his rapture surprised even himself. It seemed to make him doubly, trebly hers—to make her so much more his own. What woman does not love the father of her first-born? and what a source of holy joy would that first-born be to such a heart as his!

The Worldly, the Selfish, and the Cold may escape many sorrows; but the Sensitive, the

Generous, and the Devoted, alone know the fulness of joy.

“Robina, the mother of my child!” he whispered, as he clasped her to his heart. But there is a joy which is almost as sacred in its nature, as grief itself, and over that holy joy we drop a veil.

CHAPTER XII.

FLY AND THEY'LL FOLLOW—FOLLOW AND
THEY'LL FLY.

They are in London now—London in the height of the season—that doating husband and that young coquettish wife. She had found the exquisite home that awaited her, decked with all that taste and wealth and love could devise; and Eva Morris, pale, subdued, and (in spite of the many handsome presents Mr. Luxmore, through Robina, presented to her) attired in a manner suited to her fortunes and her taste, and

which put to flight all Mrs. Luxmore's fears of finding a rival in the poor *protégée*.

Robina, like most coquettes, had great faith in dress. She was in mourning it is true, and therefore could not eclipse all around her as completely as she wished ; but Eva, out of compliment to the Luxmores, was in mourning too, and Robina felt sure that her plain robe of black bombazine for the morning, and simple white muslin and black ribbons for evening dress, could not stand any comparison with her own rich silks, her sweeping trains, her brilliant jet ornaments, her bugle trimmings, and her waving plumes.

So young, so beautiful, so lively, engaging, and adroit—the wife of the wealthy, the aristocratic, and indulgent Luxmore, soon became the rage. Her parties were the best attended, her equipages the most brilliant, of a very brilliant season. With a new, and to the imaginative and sensitive Arthur Luxmore, a boundless claim on his indulgence and devotion,

it was his delight to gratify every fancy, whim, and girlish freak of hers.

“She was, alas! just the sort of woman (a woman of a scheming head and cold heart) to take advantage of such a devotion; she condescended to the almost exploded humbug of ‘*longings*,’ (those stains on the wisdom of our forefathers and the sincerity of our foremothers). Yes, whenever even to her own grasping and selfish nature, her wishes seemed too exorbitant, or when she knew that to her watchful and all-believing husband, it would seem dangerous to comply, then did Robina demean herself even to counterfeiting the ‘*longings*’ of a by-gone day; and Luxmore, though he did not believe in the fact, had no doubt she fancied it true, and often preferred the risk of yielding to that of thwarting her.

Thus, in spite of her mourning, and her delicate situation, and against his own wishes, tastes, and judgment, she was for ever in a crowd—a brilliant crowd, it is true—but still a

crowd, and therefore in every way unsuited to her past misfortunes, her present position, and her future hopes. A train of admirers, nay worshippers—worshippers of the wife's beauty and the husband's dinners, followed wherever she appeared—many who paid their idle attentions, and spending their idle time ; and while she had tact enough to show a preference to none in particular, Luxmore schooled himself to endure the general homage paid her. .

Among the many who bestowed their ennui and their idle time on the 'Beauty' and her pretty protégée Eva Morris, Captain Fitzgeorge was remarkable, for his person, his conceit, his nonchalance, and the adroit manner in which he contrived to awaken Mrs. Luxmore's attention, by sharing his own between her and her poor companion.

Whether Eva's classic and simple beauty, her *saiseté* and her dignified humility, had any power to rival her in Captain Fitzgeorge's admiration, Mrs. Luxmore could not decide.

Vanity said 'No'—Jealousy whispered 'Yes.' Perhaps his inconstant heart felt alternately the influence of each; but often when he might have been fanning Mrs. Luxmore, he was dancing with Miss Morris—and cutting pencils at her drawing table, when he might have been winding silks for the Beauty on her sofa.

Mr. Luxmore was rejoiced to see this. He did not own even to himself, why Fitzgeorge's attentions to the poor *protégée* so pleased him. He would have sacrificed something considerable (supposing a mutual affection sprung up) to make Eva Morris a tolerable match for Fitzgeorge, and he often, in the trusting and unsuspecting innocence of his heart, discussed the subject with Mrs. Luxmore, to whom it was gall and wormwood; not that she loved Fitzgeorge—love had little share in her composition—but with the selfish, jealousy often rages, where love has never dawned; and when Luxmore pointed out how well Eva and Fitzgeorge

looked together, how admirably they were matched in person and in years, she turned not to contemplate Fitzgeorge as matched with Eva, but as contrasted with Luxmore. She determined to be herself the sole object of Fitzgeorge's attentions. Luxmore should see whether Eva could dispute the palm with her. Perhaps, (suggested her narrow and grudging heart,) while he looks on Eva as so well suited to Fitzgeorge, he thinks me well matched with himself—considers me, because I am mated with a middle-aged cripple, as well matched with such a husband. Luxmore and Robina! Fitzgeorge and Eva! It would drive me mad! The same Fitzgeorge whom I so slighted for this same Luxmore."

Ah, little did she deem that that same Luxmore, of whom she thought so slightly, was a thousand times lovelier in Eva's eyes than the young and brilliant Fitzgeorge—that those soft eyes full of melancholy tenderness often strayed in spite of all her rigid self-discipline,

from the perfect face and bright coloring, the noble figure and gay uniform of the self-satisfied Fitzgeorge, to the small, drooping form of poor Luxmore, who sate with pale cheek and watchful eyes, apart, apparently reading or writing, but in reality noting every capricious movement and varying glance of his young wife. Luxmore would indeed have risen in Robina's mean and imitative mind, had she known how pure a shrine he had found in young Eva's heart, and how deep was the secret but unwilling homage paid him by one younger, more gifted, far, far better and more amiable, and in reality of loftier beauty than herself.

Yes, Eva Morris, poor, dependent, and either the *protégée* of the narrow-minded, jealous, and capricious Mrs. Luxmore, or the wretched 'Clothes Teacher' at Miss Mc. Prudie's, would have scorned Fitzgeorge with Luxmore's wealth, and proudly devoted herself to Luxmore with Fitzgeorge's poverty, had it been her happy fate to have awakened, while

he was yet free, one tithe of that devotion he lavished on his thankless, heartless wife.

But Eva does not even whisper this sad truth to her own sad heart, else Eva were not here.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VICTIM OF LOVE.

While Vanity and Jealousy, (vile twins)—who work in woman's heart more mischief than Love ever did, and for whose dark and evil deeds he is often brought in guilty—were betraying the young wife into many dangers and many follies, kind Fate took pity on one, blind as herself, and saved Luxmore the misery of seeing at length his idol's undignified advances to a dangerous man, and the coquettish snares which spread for another would certainly have entangled herself. The fatigue and ex-

citement of the life she had led, (so ill-suited to her delicate situation,) stretched Robina on a bed of sickness, and before she rose from it, Fitzgeorge was ordered abroad with his regiment.

Bitterly now did Mr. Luxmore condemn in himself those fond compliances, and that weak indulgence which seemed at once to threaten all that was dear to him, both in possession and in hope.

How bitterly poor Eva wept for him! and when at length the crisis was passed, Robina safe, and all his fondest hopes renewed, how earnestly did she entreat him to remove his wife from scenes so fraught with temptation to her and chances of misery to him.

Luxmore readily listened to advice so agreeable to him. He longed to be in the country with his darling, and he had no doubt that Eva was weary of scenes, where she had no hope of meeting Fitzgeorge.

It was some time before Robina was suffi-

ciently recovered to leave town ; when she was able to do so, she made little objection to the change, for the time of her confinement drew near—London was deserted—Fitzgeorge was gone. It was *mauvais ton*, to be seen in the forsaken haunts of Pleasure and Fashion, and Luxmore Hall in Berkshire, near Windsor, was fixed upon as the birth-place of her child. Among the few places Mrs. Luxmore wished to call at before she left London, were Colonel Stuart's, and Miss Mc.Prudie's.

At Colonel Stuart's it will be remembered, she first met Mr. Luxmore. The Stuart family had called several times on Mrs. Luxmore, and she had returned the compliment ; but a few 'not at homes' and a few cards had been all the result.

At Miss Mc.Prudie's she had not presented herself, and had not allowed that lady to know of her whereabouts, fearing she might secure herself a bore for the season ; but now that the season was over, and that she was about to

depart, she determined to indulge her curiosity and her vanity by a visit to the "Establishment for Young Ladies."

Coquettishly attired as a convalescent, anxiously watched by Luxmore, and attended by Eva—Robina, wrapped up in costly shawls, and lolling in her elegant carriage, preceded by outriders, drove to Colonel Stuart's, Twickenham Villa.

A feeling of sadness stole over poor Eva's heart, as she drove through the grounds, where first the only man she felt she could ever have loved, had beheld and courted another. Luxmore's cheek was paler even than its wont, and passionate memories filled his heart, while in spite of Eva's presence, he gazed with tearful rapture on his young wife, so delicately lovely from recent illness, and whose evident pride and pleasure he, poor deceived one, attributed to her glory in her choice of a husband, not of an equipage.

Before they reached the house, they met two-

gentlemen walking together in earnest conference. They proved to be Colonel Dunkeld and Sir Harry Vane, the once joyous bridegroom of that memorable first of May, every happy hour of which Luxmore was fondly recalling to the absent Robina, and every detail of which, little as it moved the wife, sank into the heart of the poor companion.

But what a change had a year wrought in the gay and happy Sir Harry. Thin, pale, watchful, he seemed to drink in the gloomy doctrines and bitter forebodings of Colonel Dunkeld; and as he hastily bowed to Robina and turned into the shrubbery, she felt almost sure that his eyes were red with recent tears. Colonel Dunkeld sought not to follow him—a new party was fresh prey to the heir of the Darksides.

As he stopped to speak, the Luxmores' carriage of course drew up, and Colonel Dunkeld began.

“So Mrs. Luxmore, I'm glad to see you

about again, or rather perhaps I should say I'm sorry."

"Well," laughed Luxmore, "I was surprised to hear you, Dunkeld, own you were glad of anything."

"And you well might be, for I see nothing to be glad of—certainly not of an invalid's driving about in an easterly wind."

"An easterly wind!" said Robina, "I assure you I find it too warm."

"So much the worse! the warmer you are the more likely to take cold. Dear me, how you're altered—I shouldn't have known you again."

"Well," retorted Robina, "you're much the same as ever—I see no change in you."

"A few more wrinkles, a few more grey hairs, and a few more rheumatic pains, and a few more sorrows, both of my own and my friends; there's no other change in me that I know of. But it's all the same, all the world over; nothing but misery, nothing but dis-

appointment; why I came out to say a few words of comfort to Vane, poor fellow! And before I've half convinced him, that there's nothing in this world worth a curse, I meet you all looking more dead than alive, and all of you evidently fretting yourselves to death."

"Yet we were never happier," said Luxmore, laughing.

"Then I'm sure you must be weary of this dull life."

"Not quite, are we, Robina? We do not think ourselves so very miserable."

"Perhaps not; it would be better for you if you did. So Sir Harry and Lady Vane said a month ago; and look at them now."

"But what ails them?" asked Robina; "they seemed so very happy and so well matched."

"No, no," groaned Colonel Dunkeld, "no people are well matched; or if the young couple are well suited, relations don't suit; fathers don't suit sons-in-law—mothers don't

suit. Look at me and my son-in-law—at daggers drawn. Look at Sir Harry Vane and Mrs. Stuart——”

“What of them?” eagerly asked Robina.

“What of them? why they’re as jealous of each other as two country belles. Lady Vane was her mother’s darling, her pet, her idol, her companion, her doating piece, the favourite in short; I don’t wonder at it, for she is, or rather she was, a sweet creature, and her love for her mother was —— just like my poor banished darling’s for me”—and his voice grew husky. “Well, as I foretold to Mrs. Stuart on the wedding-day, it’s much the same case; the girl loves her mother, and she loves her husband, but she cannot devote herself to both, at least not at the same time. She cannot be Miss Stuart and Lady Vane at once; she cannot sit an hour with her mother without offending her husband, nor take a walk with her husband without making her mother jealous. This jealousy too begets rivalry. If she is pleased,

poor thing, with a shawl, or a toy, or a trinket her husband gives her, her mother, jealous of her every look and word of pleased acknowledgment, tries to extinguish or transfer it, by eclipsing the husband's present, with another of the same kind, but better still. I have seen the poor thing give up, in tears and terror, a ball she had looked forward to with much delight, because she had been presented with splendid bouquets for the occasion, both by her mother and her husband ; she could not carry both, and would not offend either—and so on through everything."

"Poor thing," said Eva, as if to herself; "I knew the Unloved had much to suffer—I little dreamt of the miseries of too much love."

"Ah, Miss Morris," said the lugubrious Colonel; "both are miserable—both are to be pitied. The race of man is an accursed race, and every son of Adam and every daughter of Eve will discover sooner or later the truth of those fine lines :—

"And know whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be!"

"But," asked Robina, "what is the cause of the present evident distress of Sir Harry Vane? He seemed to have been weeping."

"Weeping! to be sure he had, they've all been weeping, they're all of them always weeping, storming, sulking, or writing each other letters, though in the same house; but as for weeping, we've all cause enough to weep, and those who don't weep outwardly, do inwardly—that's the only difference."

"And what was Sir Harry so grieved at just now?" asked Robina; who, like all people of little minds, took a lively interest in a tale of slander.

"Now! oh, poor fellow, he's cause enough—at least most people would think so; but I don't think anything in this vile world worth weeping for. There were hopes of an heir. An heir indeed! what is an heir? (in a general way) an heir of sin, and sorrow, and shame, and sickness, and infirmities."

"Oh, but what has happened in this particular case?"

"Why, after a succession of quarrels and reconciliations, meetings in love and partings in hate, for (but for this jealousy, Harry and his mother-in-law are very fond of each other,) it was agreed that Lady Vane should come and stay with her mother to recruit her health, which has been much impaired by fretting; Harry was to bring her, and then go and look at some estates, which he has sadly neglected in his exclusive attention to his wife. Well, they came all smiles, all hope, and got on so well for a day or two, that although I warned them all separately how it would be, Mrs. Stuart pressed Sir Harry to prolong his visit. He did so, and they soon fell out about the present treatment of Lady Vane, and the future management of the unborn babe. Lady Vane, poor thing! sided with both, and offended both. They were more violent than ever, and terrified her so that she fainted. Each then loudly accused the

other as the cause of her swoon; she was appealed to by both, and not chusing to criminate either, both left her in wrath—Mrs. Stuart to shut herself up in her room, and write the poor victim a reproachful letter, and Sir Harry to order his horses and be off. She crept to her room; and while the mother was dashing her excited pen along the paper, and Sir Harry was swearing at his groom, Lady Vane's bell rang violently and long. The Husband and the Mother rushed, pale, aghast, and conscience-stricken, to the room; they met Lady Vane's maid rushing out—her mistress had miscarried!"

"And when did this happen?"

"Oh, an hour or two ago."

"And how is Lady Vane now?"

"She is in no immediate danger; but her mother is half-frantic at her daughter's bitter disappointment and despair. As for Harry, as I am such an old friend, and happened to be on a visit here, I was trying to convince him of the

folly of expecting anything but misery and disappointment in this world ; and I was endeavouring, too, to persuade him that whether Lady Vane keeps on terms with her mother or not, there is little chance of her ever recovering her health, or bringing a living child into the world. Poor fellow ! he listens to me now."

"The greater pity," said Luxmore. "I only wish I knew him well enough to make him listen to me. But of course, Robina dearest, all we can do, is to retire unobserved ; this is no time for calling."

"I'll say," said Dunkeld, "how shocked you all were."

"No, no, say nothing about us."

"Well, least said soonest mended ; there's little enough to be said about any one that will do any good. By the bye, I dare say Fitz-george is shot by this time ; a happy escape for him if so."

"He would think otherwise," said Luxmore,

glancing at Eva ; "but I happen to know he is quite well and quite safe—so farewell."

"Farewell—an idle word," said Dunkeld, "who ever did fare well ? . . . There goes Vane—he's looking for me."

"Poor fellow !" said Robina, as they drove out of the grounds ; "in his present state that old Job's comforter will be his death."

"I can indeed pity him," said Luxmore ; "I who have just been spared the anguish he now feels."

"Poor Lady Vane !" said Eva, wiping away a tear ; "to think that to any it should be a misfortune to be too much loved !"

"Come," said Robina, "let us go, and in a good laugh at Miss Mc.Prudie, forget this silly affair."

Luxmore looked first at Robina, and then at Eva—Robina jealous of the interest poor Lady Vane excited !—Eva silently weeping for her ! For the first time Luxmore thought Eva beautiful, and Fitzgeorge a happy man.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD FACES AGAIN.

Robina was not a little disappointed in the result of her visit to Miss Mc.Prudie. That lady was entirely engrossed by herself and her own affairs. Her former school-fellows (before whom the young wife had expected to shine,) were all enjoying a prolonged vacation—prolonged on account of the approaching nuptials of Miss Mc.Prudie and Mr. Gillespie !

Miss Twitch, who was to act as bride-maid, was engaged in making favours. Miss Mc.Prudie, in bridal white, with the yellow hue of

time upon it, was trimming an old turban with new orange flowers; and Mr. Gillespie, flushed with a hideous joy, was imbibing whisky punch of his own composition, concocted thus early in the day, not so much for his own enjoyment, as for the base and cruel purpose of putting Miss Mc.Prudie off her guard, and thus getting into his possession the love-gift of former days, so long regretted, and so anxiously plotted for.

This great object of his life he had at length achieved, (as it is said man ever does anything, however difficult, which he sets his whole heart and mind upon effecting) under the pretence of getting it more modishly set, he has taken it with the daring of affianced love, from the *fichu* of Miss Mc.Prudie, and he is rejoicing in the recovery of his treasure when our party was announced. Why he should be so anxious about the token, now he has secured the fair Mc.Prudie herself, none can tell. We must hope that Time, the great tell-tale, will let us into this secret.

Miss Mc.Prudie received Mr. and Mrs. Luxmore with little *empressement*; she had nothing more to hope from the husband, and she knew full well that Robina was not of a lavish nature. The appointment her Intended had obtained was one of some importance and great emolument in Canada; thither she intended to repair, with the happy Gillespie, directly after the wedding. She had sold her school and her connexion to Miss Fitzosborne, and by the advice of Gillespie had purchased a house in Quebec, and furnished it elegantly for their future residence. This being the case, she had little object to gain in courting Robina; and Miss Twitch, who was to attend the newly married pair, as 'half friend, half underling,' and who considered that she had been personally slighted in the preference shown to Eva, tossed up, what was now, a confirmed bottle nose, of scarlet hue, and deigned not the slightest comment on Robina's fine clothes or gay equipage. Mr. Gillespie, after a few ser-

vile compliments, which he instinctively paid to a man of wealth and consequence, hastened away; and shortly after Robina, much disappointed, took her leave, with her husband and Eva; and the bride and bridemaide elect, returned to their whisky punch.

Indeed, we may here observe, that the spirit of whisky, not of love, was at the bottom of all these changes. Miss Mc.Prudie had for some time suspected that she must resign either her school or her bottle. Bacchus is a god, who, the more homage he receives, the more he exacts. Miss Mc.Prudie found she must either drink less, or retire from the keen young eyes, and other quick perceptions, of twelve sharp-witted pupils; a scarlet nose, a shaking hand, a dizzy brain, and a tottering step, could not escape their notice. Miss Mc.Prudie must give up her bottle or her school. The conflict was a brief one—she gave up her school; and Miss Twitch likewise, under the spells of the bottle Imp, agreed to give up an honourable reliance

on her own industry and talents, for a mean dependence, in a foreign land, on the narrow-minded Miss Mc.Prudie, and the churlish, niggardly Gillespie.

But when did an habitual dram-drinker ever retain one noble sentiment, one honest purpose, or one praise-worthy habit? However, Miss Twitch, little as she suspects it, is only a tool. She had made up her mind to act as a fool; she did not know that fools, in certain hands, soon become knaves; but we anticipate.

CHAPTER XV.

AN ENGLISH HOME.

Luxmore Hall was a fine old place. The large, well-built mansion stood on an eminence, commanding a lovely park, through which a silver trout stream danced and sparkled.

The fine old trees feathered down to the velvet sod; the deer played at hide and seek among them. There was a lovely contrast of green and undulating slopes, basking in the sun, and of dark, dense woods, where the rooks for centuries had made their homes. The place had great natural advantages, and Art had done

her utmost to improve them. Of the river, and the sunny slopes, Nature might well be proud; the shrubberies, the flower gardens, the groves, and the conservatories were among the fairest triumphs of art.

To Eva, who had never dwelt in a lovely country home, it seemed a paradise; she was never weary of roaming through the dark woods, of rowing on the silver stream, of sitting under some huge beech or venerable oak upon the velvet lawns, or of inhaling the incense of a thousand flowers, from some quaint old arbour, in the antique parterre, where sate a gorgeous macaw—the only creature, save those winged gems the butterflies, that could match the brilliant hues of the flowers.

In this sunny, old-fashioned flower garden Eva would sit for hours, and forget in the pervading happiness around her, her own sad story and blighted hopes. While every flower seemed to enjoy the soft breeze it perfumed, and every bee seemed to hum in ecstasy, while the birds

sang and sported with so much gladness—and a fountain in the centre of the garden danced for joy—Eva could not weep. A vague hope, and a dreamy but delicious trust in him who had made all these fair and happy things, filled her heart. She contrasted her present fate, (the honoured and uncontrolled guest of the kind and generous Luxmore) free to enjoy all the most exquisite beauties of Nature and Art, and little annoyed by Robina, who was beginning to be entirely engrossed by her own sufferings, with her life of hard and ill-requited toil, in the close confinement of a small Town house, like Miss Mc.Prudie's—the wretched strip of garden, the few miserable trees with their scanty foliage, and their stems blackened with the poisonous London smoke—she could hardly believe, as she roamed at large through Luxmore Park, that she had once thought a few hasty turns in Miss Mc.Prudie's odious little garden, a positive treat, and that a few sturdy wall-flowers, and sickly whitish heartseases,

(sole growth of the wretched soil) had been "*Picciolas*" to her poor heart and dreary existence.

Poor Eva Morris! her story was a common, but a sad one. Her father was a gentleman of old family, and without fortune, but with a tolerable appointment, he married a portionless beauty. They had several children, and Eva, the youngest, was early sent to Miss Mc. Prudie's to be educated *à la mode*. Consumption, which carried off her beautiful mother, made such ravages in Eva's home, that she was, at fourteen, her father's only remaining treasure. He kept her with him; and in her early developed intellect, her gentle and affectionate nature, and her many endearing charms, he seemed to forget he was a mourner. But Eva was doomed to be doubly an orphan; her father died suddenly, and she was left desolate!—desolate indeed, for he died insolvent! Her grief was that deep, silent, lasting grief, which does not wash itself away with many tears. She

had no near relatives, poor Eva ! and a distant relation thought she did a great deal for the destitute girl, by paying fifty pounds for her, as an apprentice to her former school-mistress, Miss McPrudie. After a year's apprenticeship, she sank, as we have seen, into 'Clothes' Teacher,' and but for Luxmore, would perhaps have continued in her odious and irksome situation, till hard work, close confinement, impure air, and silent sorrow did their work, and sent the orphan on earth, to her Father in heaven. Poor Eva ! her cup was not quite full, since there was yet room for that bitter and overflowing drop—unhappy love.

And unhappy love Eva did feel, while Arthur Luxmore was yet free ; for however unhappy, it was not then quite hopeless ; but when it became so, and she saw him another's, she would not suffer herself to feel the wild deep, passionate interest in, and enthusiastic gratitude for him, which she had felt. Moralists tell us there is no such thing as Love with-

out Hope, and Eva tried to persuade herself that the deep and melancholy anxiety she felt for his happiness—her jealous care of his honour—her watchfulness for his comfort—and her prayers for his health and peace—were merely the orphan's humble gratitude and meek regard—the young girl's first fond friendship for her only friend; and moralists must be right, but yet for all that Eva's feelings were much like those of Hopeless Love.

But still there is a pensive, half-tearful happiness in her present life. Robina, softened by the langour of indisposition, and by some haunting and natural fears, as her time of trial draws near, is gentle and even kind to her attentive and meek companion. Eva's tasteful and clever needle is active for the decoration of the expected darling. What pride to her to toil for Luxmore's child! And all she does is so praised! so admired! so appreciated! She, accustomed only to censure, reproach, and with every new effort, new exactions!

They arrived at Luxmore Hall so near the time of Robina's confinement, that they declined all visiting except a mere interchange of cards and calls with the families in the neighbourhood. Lady Mc. Grigor had coldly declined to be present at this important and interesting event; and poor Eva found herself, at seventeen, the only intimate friend of the anxious husband, and the young and suffering wife. The nearest town was far away—the nearest house was some miles off. Robina was inexperienced as a child, and Luxmore had never been a domestic man, till love made him so. But Eva's was a nature to rise to meet all difficulties; and the young girl, so gifted in mind and so devoted in heart, was in the hour of trial, of more real use and real comfort, than a host of matrons would have been.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WIFE'S PERIL AND THE HUSBAND'S
WATCH.

If Luxmore had loved his young and beautiful wife in her hours of gaiety and gladness, he adored her now in the season of sickness and of suffering. The languor of indisposition lent a softness to her manners, and the pallor of her cheek seemed to him to spiritualise her beauty. Robina, like all vain people, liked to be an object of watchful interest and alarm. She liked to be pitied and (in common parlance) petted; she liked to see her husband watch her every

movement, and Eva tremble if she sighed. Robina, too, like all frivolous women, was a coward; she really dreaded her approaching trial with a haunting, sickly terror, that made her cling to those near her as if they could protect her from Fate, and as her weak mind was full of secret superstition, she dreaded a solitude, which to her was full of evil omens. When she could not sleep, she would not lie awake alone, and Arthur Luxmore was only too glad, too proud, to watch beside her; for he attributed to Love, the weakness that sprang from Fear. Of the most cheerful, patient, and untiring devotion, there are few such records as Mr. Luxmore's life at this time could furnish. The more he did for her, the more he sacrificed for her, the more he watched and tended her, the dearer she became to him; and in her own artful and endearing manner, she contrived to exact the more, the more he yielded. While affecting to conceal her sufferings, she made the most of them in every way: and for some

months the life of the husband was that of willing slavery. But the time came on with giant strides, when even Robina could not exaggerate her sufferings. The life she had led in London, by disordering her general health, protracted and increased the anguish and bitterness of her hour of trial; and for three long days and three long nights her agonies were unspeakable, and her life in danger.

But all this time, (this dreadful time) the bodily tortures of the wife were surpassed by the mental anguish of the husband; and poor Eva hovered between the room where Robina's moan grew fainter and fainter, to the ante-room where the miserable husband kept his dreadful watch; and the words of comfort and hope her wan lips tried to breathe, were belied by the ghastly hue of her cheeks, and the care-worn despair of her eyes.

The doctors (three of whom were in attendance) were calm, stern, and resolute. As a

general rule they had determined that all mental agitation increased bodily danger, they made no allowance for particular cases; and they would not permit the distracted husband, to exchange one word with the suffering wife. They answered every passionate appeal of poor Luxmore's with a calm request, that he would compose himself, and abide the issue; they spoke of the possibility of a fatal result; they argued the case as if to Luxmore it was not life or death! and when he was rushing, half frenzied, to fold Robina to his bursting heart, they urged him to go to bed, and terrified him into quiet by assuring him it would be their painful duty to secure the ante-room against him, if he in any way suffered his presence there, and his violent emotions, to be known to their unruly and excitable patient.

The whole household, engrossed by the immediate peril of its mistress, seemed to forget Mr. Luxmore's very existence. Eva alone, like a ministering angel, came every now and

then, though only to tell him that Robina still lived, and to make the most of every little gleam of hope she could glean from the garrulous nurse and the least inaccessible of the medical men.

It was the close of the third night of this horrible suspense; the servants who had been active and anxious at first, fairly worn out, had fallen asleep in the servants' hall; the house was quiet, save when from the sick-room came now and then on Luxmore's tortured ear a wild shrill shriek, or a low heavy moan, heard even while the doctors argued, disputed, and discussed; Mr. Luxmore stood, where he had stood for hours, at a window near a door which opened into a corridor communicating with Robina's room. He placed his hot and throbbing brow against the cold window-glass, and he marked the dark and funereal branches of the fir trees wave in the moonlight; and with an attention to passing objects, which, (strange to say), is not incompatible in the senses with

the deepest anguish in the heart, he watched their dark undulations on the moonlit sod.

Suddenly it struck him how much like the plumes of a hearse they waved to and fro. The thought linked itself with Robina—Robina, his young, his blooming, his idolized Robina—snatched from the fair world and his adoring love! Robina to die thus—to die for him!—to go down to the cold grave, to feed the red earth worm! As torturing fancy conjured up these images, hot tears gushed forth, and he fell upon his knees and prayed—a prayer so fervent, so fraught with faith, that such is seldom breathed on earth—seldom disregarded in Heaven! It was some time since Eva had been to his side; there was a more than usual bustle and commotion in his poor wife's room—one piercing and prolonged shriek startled him to his feet, and then a long stillness and a long silence ensued; and but for a something which had stolen into his heart as he breathed his prayer, he would have deemed all over!

But no! no! not so—not so! she comes, she comes! Eva, with eyes that smile through her tears, and pale lips which cannot speak at first, but still are eloquent of joy! At length the words, “They live,” burst on the husband and the father’s ear! “They live!” she cried—“Robina and your child!”

“Oh, bless you! Bless them! Bless the God of mercy!” murmured poor Luxmore. His half inarticulate voice startled Eva, who was hastening back to the sick room. She raised her lamp, and as she did so, the ghastly pallor of Luxmore’s lip and cheek had scarcely met her view, before to her horror she saw him fall fainting to the ground.

He might perhaps have nerved himself for Despair, but this sudden Rapture was too much for him. And Eva for a moment, as she knelt beside him, and raised his head and pillowed it on her bosom, believed that to love him would be now no sin, for that he was of this world no more! But ere long the hues of life came faintly back

to his wan cheek, to recede again, and leave it white as the cold moon who looked with so heavenly a calm on the passionate child of earth. And now was seen the delicate devotion and considerate forethought of woman's love, Eva knew that Luxmore would blush to have his emotions betrayed to cold eyes—to have strangers or menials gaze on this evidence of his love—and so she did not shriek, did not call for assistance, did not suffer her own feelings to make her unmindful of his. She laid him gently on the ground—she opened the window—she went noiselessly in search of some restoratives—she called him back to life—she saw his colour return, his eyes open and gaze around, and then, unwilling he should see in her, a spectatress of his emotions, she glided unperceived away.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REQUITAL.

The immediate peril was past, but the precautions of the medical men were more rigid than ever. They denied poor Luxmore the ecstasy of blessing his wife.

"I have known," said the Doctor, calmly, in reply to his passionate entreaty—"I have known under similar circumstances, a woman whom I had saved with difficulty, die of the mere joy of seeing her infant in her husband's arms. We must not risk it."

The Doctor was a kind and good man, but so used to human sufferings that he spoke without the slightest emotion, of an event so harrowing and so touching, that related of a mere stranger it blanched Luxmore's cheek, and made his heart stand still.

"You will see, Madam!" said the Doctor, turning to Eva, "that Mrs. Luxmore is kept perfectly quiet. The nurse has my directions. Every half hour a little nourishment must be administered, if Mrs. Luxmore is awake; and if"—he added, with a professional smile—"Mr. Luxmore cannot be kept quiet without some little indulgence, we will allow him to take one peep at his little daughter!"

His little daughter! How Luxmore's heart throbbed; he had been so entirely engrossed by his wife, that he had not even asked whether the child was a boy or a girl; and though his circumstances rendered a son so desirable, he felt no disappointment at the announcement; but at the thought that he had a daughter, a

flood of delicious pride and gratitude rushed over his heart.

"Mr. Warner, Madam!" said the Doctor, "will pass the night here. Dr. Rashley and myself are waited for at the Castle. Let me again recommend, nay, insist on, perfect quiet and repose for Mrs. Luxmore. Sir, I wish you joy."

He bowed low to Eva, whose admirable conduct, and devoted self-control during this protracted trial, had impressed even the Doctor with respect, and filled him with so much confidence, that after the first glance of surprise at her youthful appearance, he quite forgot that so sensible, quiet, and useful a coadjutrix, was only a young and timid girl in her teens.

The two physicians are gone, and in shaking hands with Mr. Luxmore, each has felt the welcome presence of a *note* by way of fee, and in the unusual munificence of the reward, has read the rapture of the heart that bestowed it.

And it was Eva's grateful task to place the

First-born in the Father's arms. She would not that the wondering eyes of a hired nurse, should behold his tears of silent joy and deep thankfulness. How fragile a vessel seemed this little darling, to breast the waves of this troublesome world—how frail a bark to be freighted with so rich a cargo of love and hope. A dreadful fear that a being so tender and so ineffably delicate could never live in this cold, bleak, coarse world, stole into the Father's heart as he gazed at the minute and perfect little hands, and listened to the little feeble moan, that came through many a fold of cambric, lace, and flannel.

"We have all *been thus*," said Eva, reading his thoughts, "and yet we have grown strong to suffer."

"Take her, Eva, take her! I grow faint with fear as I look upon her." He touched the little warm soft cheek with trembling lips, and Eva gladly resigned so fearful a charge to the

large, comfortable, and accustomed lap, of a canting old nurse.

She then persuaded Mr. Luxmore to retire to his room ; and this he did on condition that she, too, should take some rest. But scarcely had he laid his head on the pillow, when haunted by the fear that the Doctor's directions might be neglected, and his Robina become exhausted, he stole down-stairs to inquire whether the necessary nourishment had been administered, and came in contact with Eva, who, seized with the same alarm, was hastening, barefoot and dishevelled, on the same errand.

In spite of three miserable days and three sleepless nights, the husband could not rest, and it was well he did not, for the weary nurse fell into a loud and snoring sleep, and but for Mr. Luxmore and Eva, Robina's rest, (when she might have obtained some,) would have been broken, and the Doctor's prescriptions (which proved to be of vital importance) neg-

lected. Fearful, however, of agitating the sufferer by his presence, he conquered his desire to see her, and glided noiselessly about the darkened room. This watch he persevered in, aided by Eva, for several days and nights, during which Robina was in danger; but at length she rallied, and from a state of feverish irritability and nervous excitement, which nothing seemed to allay, she fell, to the ineffable joy of her husband and Eva, into a long, still, delicious sleep.

In this delightful and all-healing sleep, Robina remained four and twenty hours; and all this time Luxmore had only snatched occasionally a brief and wretched repose, on a sofa in the ante-room. He could not believe she was safe unless he was near her, and he would not for worlds have missed her first awaking, and the rapture of seeing her first embrace of her child, and hearing her first fond inquiry after himself. How he had watched and pined for this hour! And now he knows it is coming,

shrouded behind the curtains, he has ventured to gaze at his darling ; and there she lay—so marble-white ! her rich chesnut hair all in beautiful disorder, floating over her pillow, and descending on the fine neck and shoulders from which, in the impatience of fever, she had rent the covering. He thought, as he gazed upon her, that never in her proudest moments of health and joy, had she looked half so beautiful ; and he waited breathless with delighted expectation, while he heard her sigh and gently murmur, and finally felt sure she was awaking. Fearful of alarming or agitating her by appearing suddenly, Luxmore remained concealed ; and when the nurse, who had heard her lady moving, came forth, he determined that the meeting he had so looked forward to, should not take place till she was gone.

Poor Luxmore ! his heart stood still as he heard Robina say :—

“ Nurse ! where is Mr. Luxmore ? ”

“ Oh, I’ll be bound, ma’am,” said the nurse,

"he ain't far off; he've been in sich a way about ye—in and out, in and out, a watching of me as a cat watches a mouse, poor dear gentleman! as if I ever neglected any dear blessed lady, (and I've nussed a many)—though the fellow of you, ma'am, for patience and sufferings, I never did nuss. Shall I let Mr. Luxmore know you're awake, ma'am?"

"Oh dear, no," answered Robina, pettishly.

"Well, you're right, ma'am," answered the nurse, thinking now she had her cue—"gentlemen is only in the way in a sick room—a finding fault and a making mischief; for my part I can't abide the sight of 'em, unless ladies likes it themselves, poor dears! which some does."

"And I do not; but, nurse! I want to see the child."

"Well, ma'am, certainly, if you're equal to it."

"Equal to it!" almost screamed Robina; "why, what ails it? Good heavens! nurse, speak! Is it deformed? is it a cripple? Oh, how I shall hate it if it is!"

Poor, poor Luxmore! he heard no more—the veil has dropped—the hideous truth stares him in the face. This, then, is the return of all his love and all his care! The nurse went in search of the child, and Luxmore, cut to the very soul, humbled, wounded, and with a rising in his throat, that seemed about to choke him, passed out of Robina's room, and though the day had only begun to dawn, and it was raw and rainy, he rushed out of the house, for he felt as if he could not breathe, and as if the weight upon his heart would crush it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE NEW-BORN BEAUTY.

Robina, inexperienced and childish, was inexpressibly disappointed in her infant, which, though neither a cripple nor deformed, was a new-born infant, and like all such, was wizen, red-faced, bald, and old-looking. Robina had expected it pink and white, with blue eyes and curling hair—something like a wax doll, and she exclaimed at once: “Oh, what a little object! what a frightful little thing!”

“Lor, ma’am,” said the nurse, “why it’s the biggest beauty I ever clapped eyes on; it’s

asleep now, a blessed babe! but, it have the loveliest eyes, when they be open, just like voilets—and as for a skin, why do look here, ma'am."

"Well, I do—it's like red morocco, Nurse."

"Lor, ma'am, but that's-acause it ain't come to its color. Do look at it, ma'am—it's the very picture of you!"

"Thank you, Nurse! I have seen quite enough of it—take it away."

The wounded nurse retired with her charge, and Mrs. Luxmore, seeing Eva by her side, began to inquire for Mr. Luxmore.

His absence at such a season was inexplicable to Robina, and though it did not alarm her Affection, it wounded her Vanity. But Eva understood it only too well; she knew Mr. Luxmore had been awaiting with passionate anxiety Robina's awaking; and when the garrulous old nurse recounted to her the conversation she had just had with the young mother, and her alarm lest, as the nurse said, it should take after its

father and be a cripple—Eva felt sick at heart, for she was sure that Luxmore had heard those words, which she felt would be a knell to his peace; and when, a few minutes after, looking from her window, she saw him hurrying with distracted steps, unconscious of the cold and rain, in the morning twilight, she read in his entire indifference to his personal comfort, the ineffable anguish of his mind.

Her thoughts were with the husband, while the wife poured forth her tale of bitter disappointment in her baby's beauty. Eva was in such matters as inexperienced as herself, but to Eva the infant seemed lovely, for it was Luxmore's child, and to her heart there was an inexplicable fascination in it—its little hands, its mysterious existence, its low cooing, moaning sounds, its warm and velvet skin, and its little trembling form. She liked to sit for hours by its cot, and figure to herself its future destinies. An intense love for a creature so help-

less filled her young, warm heart, and every silly complaint of Robina's wounded her ear.

"I should not have coveted beauty so much for a boy," said Robina; "but an ugly woman is indeed a pitiable object. Think how mortifying to her mother and herself must be the life of a fright!"

"Ah, perhaps less so than the life of a beauty," said Eva.

"It looks so old," said Robina, "and it has such a shocking complexion." And the weak and silly mother began to cry.

"Now, Ma'am!" said the Nurse, "dont'ee take on so, please dont'ee, there's a dear blessed lady; you han't no knowledge of babies—but I han't nussed for forty years not to know a beauty when I sees one; and as sure as my name's Nuss Posset, that ere blessed baby 'll be as big a beauty as ever stept."

"It seems to me to have Mr. Luxmore's eyes," whined Robina.

Eva could not refrain from saying, "It cannot have finer."

Robina did not heed her; but asking for a miniature toilet apparatus, which Mr. Luxmore had invented and caused to be executed, at a great expense for her comfort and convenience, (while keeping her bed,) she proceeded by the help of the flattering glass to examine her charms, and lament over their diminution; then unloosing her long hair, she said: "Do brush it for me, dear Eva! Bobbin always hurts me—she has not your gentle hand. Take the child away, Nurse—I am sure it is a fright."

"Lor, ma'am, it'll take after you, and be a blessed beauty."

"I wish I could believe it, Nurse; but it's just as likely it should take after ——. No matter, take it away."

And away it went—the nurse assuring it all the way that it would be mamma's own girlsee, and have a sight of sweethearts—and marry a Kingsee with a crownsee on his headsee—and

be a Queensee—and all because it was a dood babee and a blessed beauty !”

“ A blessed beauty !” thought Eva, as under the influence of her gentle brushing, Robina fell asleep—the tears of selfish and ungrateful vanity still on her lashes, and the flush of excitement on her beautiful cheek. “ A blessed beauty ! Can such a being exist ? Can a creature born and bred a beauty, be other than selfish, frivolous, and vain ? Is it the good fairy’s gift to be so self-devoted, so shallow of head and cold of heart, as to feel no particle of gratitude for a Luxmore’s refined and boundless love ?—to be able to dread that her child’s eyes should resemble those dark, and passionate, and intellectual orbs, which have never met hers but with tenderness and truth—and in which she has so often seen the light of genius and the tear of sensibility ? No, she is a beauty ; and her own eyes of turquoise blue, lighted by pride and self-complacency, and roaming ever in search of praise and conquest,

these she covets for her infant girl—for these she has heard praised and admired since first flattery had the power to poison her mind. Dear little one! A beauty thou wilt be, I doubt not; I fancy I see the fatal promise already. A blessed beauty thou shalt be, if I have any power to train thee to better things than frivolous self-worship, and to shield thee from the countless woes of vanity. And oh, if I am to be so blest, as to be allowed to love thee and tend thee, and forget in thy happier destinies my own sad fate, I will try to teach thee truth, humility, and gratitude—teach thee to value the real love of one good man, above the empty homage of all the Sons of Vanity and Mammon; and then if it be ever thy happy fate to win a heart like *his*, thou wilt not slight it for its devotion, torture it for thy sport, nor break it by thy ingratitude.”

So musing, Eva rose, stole to the infant's cot, and lightly pressed her lips upon the little soft, warm forehead of the future beauty. She

then stole to the window, and seeing the rising sun was drawing aside his curtains of crimson and gold, she determined to go in search of the wounded Luxmore, for her heart misgave her, when she remembered how he had watched for Robina's waking—how he had pined for her first words when she found herself a mother. What had that waking—what had those words been !

She is gone!—The devoted and unselfish girl, throwing a shawl over her head and shoulders, has hurried out into the cold morning air, forgetful of self, and with a heart sick at the thought of another's despair. Yet both in face and form, young Eva was of a loftier, though a less showy, beauty than Robina herself. Whence then the difference ? She too was born a beauty—she was ! but she was not *bred* a beauty too.

CHAPTER XIX.

MISERY, AND ITS ALLEVIATION.

Rudely awakened from a long dream of bliss, and the tears of bitter disappointment and wounded love, driven back upon his heart, by the comfortless pride of manhood, and an arid and hopeless sense of utter desolation, Mr. Luxmore wandered through the grounds of Luxmore Park, heedless where he went, for all places were alike to him now.

After hurrying along for some time, and trying by the rapidity of his bodily motion, to lose something of the sense of unbearable

mental anguish, he found he had passed unheedingly through a succession of meadows, and was close to some hay-ricks ; and he was about to throw himself down on a pile of loose hay, which lay scattered there, when the sound of low and regular breathing met his ear, and looking behind a large and sheltering stack, he beheld a sleeping and most picturesque group.

On a pile of fragrant hay lay a young, tall, and sunburnt man, of singular beauty of form and face, and on his extended arm slept one of the loveliest women Mr. Luxmore had ever beheld, while at her white but exhausted breast, a pale, thin, half-clad infant had fallen asleep.

The man had taken off the long Irish great-coat of dark blue frieze (which revealed his country) to shelter his wife and child ; and over his own shirtless body, a worn waistcoat was buttoned. The poor young wife had evidently tried to force back upon him some part of the old and thread-bare great-coat, and in so doing

had left part of her own neck and fine waist uncovered. A reaping hook by the young man's side, convinced Mr. Luxmore that he was one of the many of the sons of poor Ireland who come over in harvest time to reap the rich fields of their wealthy sister England, and there was something in the attitude of clinging tenderness—their wealth of love in the midst of their evident want and poverty—which touched Mr. Luxmore's generous heart, and drew him for a moment from the recollection of his own more refined and ideal woes, to contemplate this picture of the actual trials and miseries of life.

The poor young wife (and such she evidently was, for Mr. Luxmore remarked with satisfaction a wedding ring on her finger) had that rich style of loveliness not uncommon among the Irish peasantry. The glowing hues of her Da Vinci complexion were set off by floating masses of black hair ; and long dark lashes, wet with recent tears, rested on her cheek, while a

smile which seemed to have contended with those tears, parted the coral lips, and showed the pearls beneath. A red boddice fitted a very fine form, and a yellow kerchief half veiled a beautiful though somewhat sunburnt bust; her short full frieze petticoat left disclosed a good deal of a fine leg, in a blue stocking, whose many darns spoke of industrious poverty; and a buckle on one of her little worn shoes, told of days when no foot was lighter in the dance than hers. An old straw hat lay beside her, and Luxmore remarked with a melancholy smile, that the hand of love had adorned it with a few wild flowers. There was something touching in the sportive gallantry which in the midst of so much misery and privation could have a heart for such a tribute, and Luxmore sighed as he thought that those faded corn flowers were dearer to that poor wanderer, than to Robina were the choicest gifts his boundless love had lavished.

Half-starved and not half-clad, and no shelter

from the damp chill air of an autumnal morning—hunger written in its most affecting characters, the lean face and form of their infant—they still seemed objects of Envy to the wealthy owner of the grand place, into one poor corner of which they had so stealthily crept.

“He is no cripple!” thought Luxmore, gazing at the fine form of the man; “he is not deformed—he is young, and she loves him! In his miserable pilgrimage of wasting fatigue, ill-requited toil, exhausting hunger, and threatened famine, I, Arthur Luxmore—I envy the poor Irish Reaper—for the wife of his bosom clings to him the closer as the storms of life close round her. Love makes that wretched nook, that hay, and that worn old coat, far sweeter to her, than my couch of down can ever be to Robina! That woman in whose attitude I read her love, she does not fear that the infant at her poor breast should resemble its father; she may fear lest that sad breast should

yield it no support ; yet is her fate happier than I have made Robina's !

“ A little, a very little, will change their sadness into joy, a little, send them rejoicing on their way ; but there is no balm for me—no help, however great, can aid, no comfort can solace, my unrequited, my rejected heart. Yet pause, there is a something left ; the luxury of making others happy almost atones for being so sad oneself ! ”

He took a note of some amount from his pocket-book, tore a leaf thence, enclosed the note with some silver for immediate use, and wrote on the paper :—“ *From a friend, touched by the evidence of an affection which want and misery seem only to have increased.* ” He placed the note in the empty basket which lay by the poor woman's side, and convinced it must be perceived directly either awoke, he hurried away, and was soon out of sight.

The only balm Mr. Luxmore could have found, he found in this good deed. In dwell-

ing on the delight and surprise of those poor wanderers, he forgot his own distress ; and Eva, when unperceived by him she watched his return, was delighted to see that his cheek wore not the ghastly hue of utter misery, and to find that he retired at once to his own room, and as she hoped, to rest.

CHAPTER XX.

THE OPENING BUD.

The nurse's prophecy proved true indeed! In a few weeks the bud began to unfold; in a few months the proud and delighted Robina owned her child a perfect beauty. All the gossips of the neighbourhood crowded round it; all the servants of the establishment contended who should talk most nonsense to it, and who should carry it out in its cap and cloak of light blue velvet and swansdown. The gardeners declared it was a rose unique; the nursery maid's greatest delight was in trimming

its rich lace caps, and decking it in embroidered robes ; and even the old cook, who had been in the family twenty years, was often found paying a furtive visit to the nursery, and assuring the little crowing, laughing baby that she was "the biggest beauty on earth, and she must make a good market of her pretty self, and be a Duchess at the leastest."

And certainly a lovelier and fairer creature never charmed a mother's eyes, or gladdened a father's heart. Already no flower could surpass the texture and the tints of its incomparable complexion ; already the soft dark lashes surrounded the large sloping eyes of a most cerulean blue ; the dimpled mouth was faultless in its rosy arch, and the little form gave every promise of perfection. Robina's thoughts were much engrossed by the probable colour of its hair, (at present its *chevelure* consisted of a few soft rings that seemed stolen from the silk worm,) and by a question whether blue, pink, or white became it best. When she did with-

draw her mind from these important discussions, it was to plan its future ball-dresses and anticipate its future conquests; but from this subject she hastily withdrew her thoughts, when she remembered that before her daughter's beauty could reach its bloom, her own must have begun to fade.

Of this melancholy fact there was, however, as yet no evidence. Robina arose from her confinement lovelier than ever; when she nursed her child, Mr. Luxmore thought that the beauty of the infant added even to the young mother's charms; but though his melancholy gaze often dwelt upon her with rapture, no words of love or admiration ever now escaped his lips. He believed that such were distasteful, and he forced himself to silence.

He seldom now appeared in the apartments where Robina and her child principally dwelt—he who before his infant's birth scarcely ever left them; and to Eva there was something unspeakably affecting in this silent and volun-

tary relinquishment of what had been the great delight and solace of his life.

Robina noticed the change with a feeling of wounded vanity, and a jealousy which often exists in hearts where love never dwelt. She looked in the glass—she saw herself fairer, brighter than ever—she took her infant in her arms and gazed on the picture she presented thus, and she decided she had never appeared so irresistible. Yet Luxmore told her so no more; he no longer took a deep and lively interest even in every ribbon she chose, every cap she trimmed, every new dress she selected; he no longer hovered ever near her with officious tenderness, supported her when she walked, sate by her when she drove out, watched by her when she slept. What could this change mean? It was attended with no resentment, no coldness, no hauteur, no ill-humour; it did not seem as if he were offended. Could he have ceased to admire her beauty, and love her person? Could devotion so entire

be short-lived? Could he be so inconstant? Could any other have power to charm him? Robina was perplexed. How much jealousy is consistent with very little love! Robina had grown accustomed to the entire and delicate devotion of one so intellectual and so impassioned, and she missed it. She tried to recal it, and never when consecrating to her his every hour and every thought, had he been the object of a thousandth part of the interest he was now, that he spent his mornings away from her, his evenings in company, took no apparent interest in what she wore, made no comment on her appearance, and paid her no more attention in public than every *gentleman* pays the woman he has married. In private he talked on indifferent topics, and never spoke to her of her loveliness or his love.

To her surprise and mortification, too, he seldom made any comment on the exquisite beauty of his little Angelina, (such was the name the mother wished the little child to bear,

and such it had received at the font.) Cold as was her own heart, her baby's beauty could warm it into rapture; but Luxmore would silently kiss its exquisite cheek, and while he would dilate upon everything connected with its health, he would make no comment on its beauty. Robina did not know that when she was out (and he quietly promoted her driving out daily, and visiting in the neighbourhood a good deal, accompanied only by Eva), his favorite post was by his baby's cot, his chief delight to feast his eyes on its enchanting and infantine loveliness, and that he often asked himself, as it smiled in his face and crowed in his arms, whether the time would ever come when it would discover he was a cripple, and the beautiful daughter would shrink from the love of the Deformed Father.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHANGE.

Robina now mixed again a good deal in the aristocratic society of Windsor and its neighbourhood. She was admired, courted, followed, and pronounced the *Belle par excellence*, wherever she appeared. Her own beauty, and that of her little Angelina, were the universal theme; and of praise and flattery no Beauty ever boasted a more ample share. But all this did not content her; one only seemed indifferent to her uncommon loveliness, and that, one, who had been its most passionate wor-

shipper. A frank and straightforward woman would have sought an explanation, would have endeavoured to ascertain from her husband the cause of such a mortifying change ; but Robina could not act openly—she was a dissembler by nature, a manœuverer by instinct—and so she watched, and waited, and planned, and suspected, and grew far more anxious to recover her husband's admiration and devotion, than she had ever been to win that of any other man.

But he continued calm, courteous, and self-possessed. He spent much of his time from home ; and when he was at home, Robina observed with jealous eyes, that he seemed rather to court a walk or a *tête-a-tête* with Eva than with herself. She marked, too, that his pale thin cheek grew paler and thinner, and was not unfrequently tinged with the flush of inward fever ; his hand, when in common form, not in ardent love, he touched her own, was either parched and hot, or chill and clammy ; he

seemed to suffer much inward pain, and two or three times Robina thought she detected glances of secret understanding between Eva and himself.

The vainest people are always the most jealous, and the most artful are always the most suspicious. Robina—the unloving wife—the vain coquette—was in a secret fever of mortified vanity, jealousy, and wrath. The suspicion once formed, everything tended to confirm it. And the idea that her husband was in love with another, instead of lowering, raised him in her opinion; while the suspicion that the young and beautiful Eva was secretly and ardently attached to him, made him seem to Robina's weak and imitative mind, an admirable and even a loveable man. The cold coquette seemed in a fair way of being in love with her own husband.

But while the jealousy she felt towards Arthur Luxmore *had* something of tenderness in its nature, her feelings towards Eva Morris were made up of envy, revenge, and fast-increasing

hatred. She determined to be rid of one, openly so much esteemed by her husband, and as she feared the object of a much deeper feeling in secret—one too whom her beautiful little Angelina, (already arrived at the witching age for showing its little preferences,) seemed to love better than herself—one who often shared with her the admiration of the Many, and secured the approbation of the Few. Robina determined to watch her opportunity. For worlds she would not have been suspected of jealousy; and in order to lull Eva into security, she appeared more fond and confiding than usual. She even won by her gentle and affectionate manner so much on Eva's confidence, that she ascertained from Eva herself that she was anxious and unhappy, and half lured her into an admission that Mr. Luxmore was in some way or other the cause of her fears and sorrows.

It was about this time that Robina remarked, that long and secret conferences frequently

took place between Mr. Luxmore and Eva, and that often after one of them Eva's cheek was paler than its wont, and her eyes red with weeping. Often Robina watched them walking together in earnest conference among the trees, and once her jealous eyes perceived Eva clasping her hands in an attitude of entreaty, and Luxmore (suddenly pausing) take those hands affectionately within his own.

But Robina has as yet seen only what convinces herself; her own suspicious and jealous heart is easily convinced; but she must know more—she must know enough to be able to demand Eva's dismissal, not as a concession to the weakness of a jealous wife, but as a punishment to an intriguing and dangerous woman, and a justice due to virtue and propriety. Not that even Robina suspected that Luxmore was a villain, or that Eva had fallen; but she did believe that he had awakened in Eva a passionate tenderness it was a guilt to feel for a married man, and had transferred to

her the delicate devotion he once felt for his wife. At this time Robina was to be pitied; and no one could blame her for determining to rid herself of a dangerous rival, in that her greatest, though till then unappreciated blessing, her husband's love.

And was it so? Have they been tried and found wanting? Has the evil spirit indeed lured into a blamable if not a guilty intimacy, a creature so spotless as Eva, and one so high-minded, so virtuous, as Luxmore? Have wounded love and mortified pride on the one side, and pity and passion on the other, driven their souls into the snares—and do they totter on the brink of that abyss, which yawns for all who meet with an acknowledgment of a love it were sin and shame to indulge—and yet continue to meet? Alas! for human nature, if creatures so formed for virtue and for light, lurk in secret places—if Eva thrusts the secret billet into her throbbing bosom, and crimson as she meets Robina's inquiring gaze—if she is con-

scious of a secret the wife must not know—shall we blame Robina's watch, and in what virtue shall we put our trust?

And Robina's watch was a secret, a silent, and a certain one; and such a watch of such a woman, nothing shall escape. It was not long before chance befriended the anxious wife. Chance is prone to befriend all who persevere in any undertaking; and one day that Robina was roaming alone in the now leafless woods, she traced Eva's small and delicate foot-prints in the slight coating of snow on the ground, and following their track, she came to a rustic bench, where she perceived Eva's reticule had been dropped.

Robina caught it up, and never very scrupulous, was under the influence of jealousy and suspicion less so than her wont. She emptied the contents into her lap; she looked round—there was no one near—the color rose to her temples, and receding left her ghastly pale; her hands trembled so that she could scarcely

clutch three letters, all addressed to Eva, and in Mr. Luxmore's hand. With eyes distended and with lips apart, Robina read :—

Abingdon Hotel, midnight.

Do not expect me home to-morrow night. I depend on you, dear Eva, to quiet all suspicion in Robina's mind; and if you cannot do that, do your best to divert it. Oh Eva, shall I ever seem less unworthy of the love I covet, less distorted, less deformed? Shall I not always be the poor, unloved, deformed one? How full of hope and joy your letter makes me! how my heart bounds—this heart so late the home of such despair; and I owe it all to you. Be secret as hitherto. If Robina goes on a visit with her child to Lady Moreton's, I will drive you over here, and you shall superintend all arrangements; but beware of Robina's suspecting aught.

A. L.

The next ran thus :—

I fear I cannot bear what I have inflicted on myself. Eva, my health is giving way, the hopes you hold out to me are less sanguine; I had dreamed I might yet be loved, yet cease to look a distorted object and a wretched cripple in those eyes that have maddened me. Will it ever be? Oh, Eva, pity the unhappy

A. L.

These incoherent and mysterious letters awoke the most dreadful suspicions in Robina's mind; the third was more explicit, and confirmed her worst fears.

On Wednesday night, at 10 o'clock, everything will be ready, and as Robina will be at Colonel Ogle's ball, you can come to me fearlessly in my own sitting-room. Do not announce till the last moment that you do not mean to accompany Mrs. Luxmore. You can plead an indisposition, which I know will not

be assumed, for head and heart will ache I know, though on the verge perhaps of the realization of a hope almost as dear to your faithful, pitying heart as to mine. The enclosed sum will, I trust, satisfy Mr. P., Mrs. B., and the necessary attendants. I trust to you to bestow it. Come noiselessly, not to awake suspicion. Oh, Eva! what have I not endured, and perhaps all in vain; but oh, this deep, this boundless love! what has it not led me to attempt!

A. L.

A fifty-pound note was enclosed in this last letter. The horror-struck, gasping Robina had no doubt that Mr. Luxmore and the wretched Eva intended to elope together—that the fifty-pound note was to remunerate the guilty abettors of this vile intrigue, and that her departure for Colonel Ogle's ball was to be the signal for the carrying into execution this base, this guilty, and heartless plot.

Robina determined to conceal her emotions

of horror, jealousy, and dismay, till the moment when her false husband and guilty rival thought miserable triumph secure ; and then would she appear, with her infant in her arms, and tax him with his falsehood, and drive the wretched Eva from the home she had ruined. And—but her plans of revenge were boundless as her wrath ; and in order to conceal her emotions, Robina rose to hide herself in her room, leaving the reticule where she had found it, and effacing as much as she could her foot-prints in the snow.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TOILET.

The important day came, to the evening of which Robina had looked forward with feelings she could scarcely analyse. Revenge and hatred (mingled with contempt) for Eva—and jealousy, wrath, and something of tenderness and the late remorse of love for Luxmore—for now that she feared she had lost, she began to value him, and to suspect that a little more real affection in the penniless orphan he had married for love, would have been only his due, and have made him hers for ever. She acted

over and over again to herself the drama in which she was to play the part of the injured wife—Luxmore that of the false and faithless husband—Eva that of the mean, ungrateful, and treacherous rival. She planned how she should appear before them just as Eva had stolen to her base and secret meeting with the husband of her early friend and benefactress. How before the vile abettors of their cruel deceit and probable elopement, Mr. P. and Mrs. B., and the menial wretches included in the letters, she would appear in her beauty and her ball-dress, her Angelina in her arms; how eloquently she would degrade and dismiss Eva, the seducer; how touchingly she would accuse, reproach, and perhaps forgive, the humbled and penitent Luxmore. How—when he saw the mother of his child in all the dignity of injured innocence, diamonds, and white satin—how would the pale and guilty Eva cower and grovel before her; and as Luxmore compared the spotless and majestic beauty

of his wife, with the pale and trembling meanness of her rival (for detected guilt must look most mean), how complete would be her triumph—how entire would be Eva's disgrace—how utter her ruin and her fall !

In order to make her very triumph seem the more complete, and her betrayer's conduct appear more ungrateful and inhuman, Robina, in the interval between the finding of the letters, and the guilty assignation, was more than usually affectionate to Eva and devoted to Luxmore. But both seemed engrossed by their guilty secret, and more than once she detected glances of mutual understanding between them ; nay, once when having left the room she lingered a moment at the door, she heard Luxmore say in a voice of triumph, "She suspects nothing, Eva—oh, that this night were come !"

"And past !" murmured Eva ; and she burst into tears.

How interminable seemed this day of sus-

pense to all! How even Robina trembled as the eventful evening drew near. As for Mr. Luxmore, before Robina went to her toilet he had retired to bed. As he left the drawing-room, where Eva, with eyes which betrayed the recent tears, and lips and cheeks ghastly pale, was presiding as usual at the tea and coffee table, and Robina was arranging her bouquet as if for the ball.

When she saw Mr. Luxmore rise, and when he whose parting with her for an hour was wont to be the signal of some word of ineffable tenderness and some passionate caress, just touched her fingers with a hand burning with inward fever, Robina felt, little as his treachery and inconstancy seemed to merit it, a wish to embrace him for the last time that he could even seem to merit her affection; and running playfully after him, she laid her hand on his arm, and said:—

“What! not one parting kiss, dear Arthur?”

Arthur started, and fixing his large and

melancholy eyes upon her beautiful, and up-turned face, he gazed at her for a few moments, and gently parted and put back with his fevered hand the golden curls that hung round her brow; he bent his lips towards her, as if about to kiss that white and polished forehead, but suddenly he checked himself.

"Not yet, not yet, Robina! *You* cannot covet the kiss of the Cripple, the Deformed, the Unloved. Poor Robina, farewell."

As he spoke, he gently placed her on a sofa, and left the room. Robina, mortified and yet touched, looked towards Eva, and perceived, though her back was turned, that she was weeping.

"Some jealous glance of hers," thought Robina, "checked his first impulse, but her hour is almost come, and my revenge will be complete as her disgrace and downfall. So musing, Robina took her candle, and repaired to her toilet.

With a beating heart, Robina arrayed her-

self as if for Colonel Ogle's ball; and so engrossed were her thoughts by her anticipated discovery and revenge, that the enthusiastic flatteries of her maid fell on an inattentive ear. It was the first time of her wearing the Luxmore diamonds, which had been re-set for her; a white satin dress, trimmed with beautiful lace and white roses, had been sent down from the first milliner in London for this ball. It was expected to be the best ball that had been given in the neighbourhood for many years, and Mrs. Luxmore had expected to be the undisputed *belle* of the evening. Her maid, who knew that such had been her wish, had done her best. No Parisian *coiffeur* could have displayed to greater advantage the chestnut tresses, and the diamond tiara. Like a painter before the picture he has just completed, the maid stood entranced, adding a touch here and there; and then

“lingered still,

Deeming those charms the offspring of her skill,

Training the silvery satin's graceful flow,
And clasping pearls lost on that bosom's snow."

And she was right when she assured her absent and unconscious lady that she had never looked so beautiful. The Abigail knew not the why, but so it was; but it was not the robe, the roses, and the gems that gave a charm to Robina unseen before; it was the absence of the vain coquettish wish to shine—the absence of the offensive consciousness of beauty; it was the concentration of thought, of purpose, and of feeling, that had displaced the self-complacent, unmeaning stare. An expressive and delicate paleness had supplanted the flush of vanity, and the provoking expectation of homage and conquest no longer offended the eye of taste.

Her maid was astonished when her lady, without one parting gaze into the mirror, one pettish rebuke, or one self-extolling remark, passed in her unheeded splendor to the nursery, and gazed long and fondly at the little Ange-

lina, as she lay like an infant Psyche asleep under the soft draperies of white muslin and rose-colored silk; the exquisite little hands were extended, and a soft flush like the centre of a shell beautified the little round cheek which rested so happily on the miniature pillow; the soft dark lashes made the white lids seem whiter still, and infancy asleep, never presented (fascinating as it always is) so fascinating a picture.

"How beautiful she will be!" murmured the mother; "but what beauty can rivet a man's affections? Already I feel that the life of a Beauty, is not all triumph; and if I find it thus already, what will it be when beauty wanes? Why did I so pray for beauty as such a boon for my child?"

Already, with a little less confidence in self, came a little more anxiety for another. As self-love decreases, better affections take its place. Robina might not have been a vain and heart-

less egotist, had she never by flattery and folly been taught to think solely of herself. She might have been a fond wife and a good mother, had she not been bred a beauty.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DENOUEMENT.

It was a few minutes before ten that Robina having, to the amazement of her coachman and footman, returned by the back-way to her own house, stole noiselessly up-stairs, startled the nursery-maid out of her first sleep, took her infant in her arms, and proceeded, with a beating heart and a pale cheek, to Mr. Luxmore's study—the place of rendezvous.

Her suspicions had been quite confirmed by discovering, as she drove home, a post-chaise evidently waiting for some one at a little dis-

tance from the house, and Robina had little doubt she should come upon Eva and her husband just as they were about to elope together.

Mr. Luxmore's bed-room, dressing-room, and study were all *en suite*, and Mrs. Luxmore stood for some little time at the door of the study before she could summon courage to go in.

The door was closed, and at first Robina could only hear Eva speaking in earnest tones to some one whose voice she recognised as a woman's. But presently she distinctly heard Mr. Luxmore cry from the inner room, "Eva, dear Eva, come to me!"

At these words Mrs. Luxmore threw open the door. Eva, pale as death, in tears and with clasped hands, had just risen to obey the summons. She started, and turned crimson, at the unexpected appearance of Mrs. Luxmore and her sleeping infant in her arms. She hastened towards her, and extended her arms

as if to interpose between the wife and the husband's dressing-room.

Robina's quick eye noted on the table, a bonnet and shawl, which she knew did not belong to Eva. She heard too a female voice in the inner room. Livid and half-choked with jealous passion, she pushed Eva violently aside, and saying with a contempt so real, that even in her it had something sublime, pointing to the bonnet and shawl on the table:—"Eva, I have long despised and hated you, for I believed you to be a rival, and even in my scorn of your treachery and ingratitude, I felt some pity for those errors which I traced to unhappy and lawless love for another's husband; but now you have sunk beneath my hate, contempt, and pity, for I see in you only a vile pander to another's vices, and I should do well to order my menials to thrust you forth from the house you have degraded by your presence!"

Eva seemed stunned at these words, and made no reply; and Robina, flinging open the

dressing-room door, stood with her infant in her arms, transfixed with horror and amazement at the scene before her.

On a sort of reclining board, fitted up with many screws, bolts, gyves, and other machinery, lay the frail form of Mr. Luxmore. A tall powerful man, with his short sleeves tucked up above his elbows, and with a countenance expressive at once of cunning and cruelty, was turning a kind of instrument in which poor Luxmore's crippled limb was fixed, and endeavouring, in spite of Mr. Luxmore's groans and livid hue, to draw it to the same length as its fellow limb. At the same time an attendant was rubbing the joints with hot oil to make them supple, and endeavouring to force one (to the luxation of which his lameness was chiefly owing) back into the socket, which it had left at his birth. Another attendant demon was screwing a species of iron band, to confine the shoulder, which was somewhat out of place; and a woman of about fifty, with something of

the appearance of a better order of nurse, was supporting Luxmore's head, bathing his brow with vinegar, and holding salts to his nostrils.

Just as Robina made her appearance at the door, the horrid superintendent had succeeded in forcing the limb down into a certain ring. Wiping his knobby forehead, he was exclaiming: "Hard work, Sir—hard work for all parties! but it'll do—we shall make a man of you yet, Sir—we'll shew 'em something of a figure yet! Holloa, Mrs. Quickly—a spoonful of brandy."

Mr. Luxmore had fainted.

A suspicion of the truth dawned across Robina's mind; she grew dizzy, faint, and sick. Luckily Eva had followed, and snatched the little Angelina from her arms. Mrs. Luxmore fell in a swoon on the floor; when she recovered she found herself in the study—Eva, and the quack Doctor, (for such he was) beside her.

"What does it all mean?" asked Robina,

hysterical tears and sobs coming to her relief: "they are killing him."

"No, no, Ma'am," replied the vulgar, forward quack—"we're making him killing. Your humble servant, Ma'am! allow me to introduce myself—Dr. Grinlay, not altogether unknown to fame. Why, you've surprised us, Ma'am; this little affair was meant as a surprise to you, Ma'am. Fancy meeting Mr. Luxmore some fine day, as straight as a dart, and with two legs of one length! oblige me by taking a look at this, Ma'am."

He handed a card, and sick at heart, Robina read.

"THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED! Hope for the hopeless! Beauty for those blighted and blasted from their birth! The curse of the cripple removed, by the skill of the celebrated Dr. Brutus Grinlay, of Carlsbad, M.D., P.R. T.G. and A.S.S., &c. &c. &c."

"Dr. Brutus Grinlay, of Carlsbad, undertakes by a method peculiar to himself, and

with instruments of which he is the sole inventor and proprietor, to remedy or remove all defects and deformities, either natural or accidental, in any part of the human body—whether the spine, limbs, joints, or muscles. No case of lameness or distortion, of however long standing, has been able to resist Dr. Grinlay's scientific, original, and admirable mode of treatment. Models of cases of singular deformity and perfect cure, submitted to any one who consults Dr. B. G. References to several distinguished and many respectable individuals—inspection of the machinery used, and details of the plan pursued, freely offered, and access to several patients under operation allowed.

“ Dr. Brutus Grinlay does not absurdly profess for *little* emolument and with *no pain*, to restore the distorted Hunch-back, or limping Cripple, to the beauties of proportion and the delights of agility ; the process is tedious, and must be remunerated handsomely. It is gene-

rally painful, and must be endured with fortitude. Courage and liberality are necessary in any one who wishes to become a patient of Dr. Grinlay's; and such a person may rely on entire secrecy and a perfect cure.

"Dr. Brutus Grinlay can be consulted daily at his residence, 300, Hatton Garden, and letters, post paid, and enclosing a fee, will meet with prompt attention.

"N.B. Parties in the country visited on remunerative terms."

"Well, Madam," said the Doctor, eyeing the pale and horror-stricken Robina, with something between the pride in the pompous advertisement of his own authorship, and admiration of her beauty—(the odious fellow was a professed flirt): "you're a little more *up to the thing* now, I take it. Mr. Luxmore's great object was to keep the matter *snug* from you till the cure was complete, and he could present

himself before you as 'straight, if not as tall,' as a poplar tree."

And the Doctor threw his own huge limbs into an attitude meant to show them off, and fixing his cunning, squinting eyes upon her, added: "None but the brave deserve the fair; you see, Ma'am, what we're ready to go through for your sweet sakes. A more obstinate and painful case, and a more resolute, brave, and enduring patient, I never met, Ma'am. We've made little progress yet, Ma'am; it's a lameness of forty years' standing, I believe—he! he! he! ha! ha! ha! But Mr. Luxmore tells us not to spare him, and we'll set him '*straight upon his pins*,' or perish in the attempt. Excuse me, Ma'am, you're new to these little matters. Let me recommend a glass of wine, Ma'am; as for me, a case like this "*takes a good deal out of me*," and even I, when it comes to a crisis, am obliged to *keep my spirits up, by pouring spirits down*—ha! ha! ha!"

He helped himself, as he spoke, from a spirit stand on the table, deliberately mixed a glass of strong punch, drank it with evident delight, and then said: "So now I'm a new man; I must just step and see if he's come out of his little attack of syncope."

Dr. Brutus Grinlay stalked into the inner room.

"Eva!" asked poor Robina, while her tears fell fast—"can you forgive me?"

"Nay, I pity you, dear Robina; if this horrid affair has nearly killed me, what must it be to his wife?"

"And why, why has he done this?"

"For your love—to seem fairer in your eyes; he fancies you hate him because he is a cripple."

"But what can have made him think so?" faltered the conscience-stricken Robina.

"He overheard you say as much when first you saw your child. Your words, Robina, at such a time, drove him well nigh mad, and this

is the result; I can explain in no other manner, the fact of a man so gifted, putting himself under that false, odious, boasting quack."

"Could you not have deterred him, Eva, from so deadly an experiment?"

"Alas, no! I only offended, nay, enraged him by the effort. I saw there was something on his mind, and I guessed what, for I, too, had overheard your ill-fated question as to whether your child was a cripple. I drew from him the truth which was breaking his heart, and I did my best to comfort him; but in vain."

"But when did you first discover that he had fallen into the snares of this odious and murderous quack?"

"One day we were all in the library together; I had remarked that on that day he was more than usually pale and dejected. He was reading the morning paper, the part devoted to advertisements; I happened to be looking at him, and I was thinking how wan and ill he

looked, when I suddenly saw him change colour; he looked up to see if you were watching him, and his eyes were bright with hope and joy. He took down a name and address from the newspaper, and shortly after he left the room and ordered his carriage."

"What was I doing, that I saw nothing of this?" asked Robina.

"You were retrimming the Brussels cap which you thought Bobbin had made so unbecoming," answered Eva, quietly.

Even Robina blushed.

"Well," continued Eva, "I took up the paper—Dr. Brutus Grinlay's false and boasting advertisement soon caught my eye; it was much the same as that you have read on his card. I felt convinced that Mr. Luxmore, blinded by passion and despair, was already the dupe of its delusive promises, and I determined to interfere, and, if possible, to deter him."

"And why did you not consult me?" asked Robina, a little piqued.

Eva hesitated; at length she said: "In all he had confided to me of his disappointment, his fears, and his sorrows, he had so bound me to secrecy, I could not venture to betray him. Perhaps my interference in the affair might seem forward and unmaidenly; but remember, Robina, he is the only true friend I ever had; true gratitude is very daring. On his return, I detected on his cheek the fever spot of secret hope; I saw too he had something on his mind, which he longed to confide to me. I induced him to do so. He had privately posted to London—he had seen this Grinlay—he returned (here Eva wept) cased in a cruel iron belt, which was torture to his delicate frame; but his noble and devoted heart was full of hope. Dr. Grinlay had pledged himself to a perfect cure. Mr. Luxmore was so entranced with his new hopes, I could not bear to damp his ecstasy by expressing the doubts and sus-

pitions I felt ; indeed, I must own that, without his excuse, I was weak enough to grow sanguine as to the result myself, when he revealed to me the plausible arguments and professions of Dr. Grinlay. I agreed to do my best to help him through his dreadful ordeal and torturing operations, unknown to you ; and I have often wept (after I had ceased myself to believe or to hope) to hear him painting to himself your surprise, your delight, and even your love, when he should be a cripple no more. This night, Robina, is the crisis of the operation ; this night, Dr. Grinlay will either realize Mr. Luxmore's hopes, or dash them for ever. As to mine, they are gone ; I have no faith left in him ; I see he is a false, grasping, boasting, illiterate quack ; and I have only been privy to the cruelties of this dreadful night, and present at this terrible scene, because I knew I had no power to prevent the operation, and I thought that I might be some little comfort to the sufferer—some little check

on the cruelty and cupidity of this set of impostors—and some little use in consoling my benefactor in the despair which I know will attend this wretch's failure."

"Nay, Eva, that shall be my task," said Robina—the affecting tale of mad devotion and rash courage which she had just heard, awakening some woman-tenderness even in her worldly heart. At that moment a low cry of intense agony was heard; Robina rushed into the dressing-room, and Eva, having laid the little Angelina, still asleep, on the sofa, followed her.

"No ladies, no ladies here, Madam," said Dr. Brutus Grinlay, his muscular arms, with the shirt sleeves tucked up, giving him the air of a butcher: "I never admit ladies."

"But I am his wife," said Robina, "and I will not leave him."

"The very reason why you must. Nurse, look to him, he has fainted."

"Oh, I will not go! I cannot go, and leave

him with such a butcher," said Robina, beside herself, as she looked on her husband's face, distorted and death-like in his agony. "Dearest love! husband!" she cried, throwing herself on her knees beside Mr. Luxmore—"be yourself—look up, beloved! dismiss these cruel quacks! I do love you, dear one," she whispered; and even in his torture the words brought a faint flush to his ghastly cheek; "and if you will send them away, I will love you dearly, devotedly."

"You cannot love a cripple, my Robina," murmured the pale lips of Mr. Luxmore. "I can bear it all, my girl! and more, indeed I can, if, when it is done, and I am no longer a deformed, distorted object, you can say with truth, 'Arthur, I love you!' But go now, dearest; you only unman me—go! Doctor, this is no place for Mrs. Luxmore—it must not be. My handkerchief, Nurse."

The Nurse quietly wiped his parched lips, and tried furtively to withdraw the handker-

chief; but Robina saw, to her ineffable horror, that it was stained with blood.

"Arthur!" she cried—the woman and the wife speaking at once from her pale lips—. "Arthur!" and she threw her arms around him and rested her head on his breast—"I will not see you murdered; I will not leave you with these ruffians."

"A fine subject for a painter, 'pon my word, Ma'am," said Dr. Grinlay, purple with passion, and foaming with impatience.

And though he spoke in sarcasm, it was a fine and touching subject. On the horrid Quack's bed of torture, lay the slight form of the "Unloved," the Cripple Husband, his eyes gazing with melancholy tenderness on his young wife, while his pallid cheek, his white lips, and the large drops on his fine brow told the agony he was enduring. One wan hand he had pressed in unutterable fondness on her cheek as it lay on his breast. Yes, there she knelt beside him, heedless of her gorgeous robes

trailing on the floor, her matchless locks floating over the husband's tortured form, and her costly tiara, which in the enthusiastic penitence of the moment she would have gladly bestowed even on the odious Grinlay, could she have saved her devoted, ill-requited husband one pang.

"Arthur! she cried, clasping her hands, "I will not go! Do not send me away."

"You must, my love! you must," faintly murmured Mr. Luxmore.

"He is about to swoon, Sir," said the nurse to Grinlay.

"He is!" replied the diabolical and ruthless quack.

"Arthur!" shrieked Mrs. Luxmore—"Arthur! Eva!"

"By your leave, fair Lady," said the dreadful Grinlay, putting his butcher-like arms, uncovered as they were, round her waist, and lifting her in spite of her screams from the side of her now insensible husband—"By your

leave, fair lady ; Miss Morris, attend to Mrs. Luxmore—I allow no ladies here—it's against the rule ; too many cooks—you know the rest."

He carried Robina by force into the study. Eva, indignant at the bold outrage, hastened to her side. Robina struggled and reproached him in vain. He placed her in a chair, and while she burst into a loud hysteric, he with a horrid laugh left the study, and hastening into the dressing-room, bolted the door.

Robina and Eva gazed at each other in mute anguish and alarm, which increased to positive terror, when Robina, listening at the door, distinguished the ill-suppressed groans of anguish of the tortured and deluded victim of the butcher Quack and his cruel myrmidons.

"Dr. Grinlay," cried Robina in a voice loud with excitement and indignation, "if you do not at once admit me to my husband's presence, I shall send for his usual medical attendant, Dr. Hydrarg, who will be able to decide better

than I can, what hope there is of the success of your operations, and what is more important still, what danger there may be to Mr. Luxmore from this protracted agony."

At these words the Quack Doctor threw open the door; his mocking and ferocious manner was exchanged for a sneaking deference:—"I only wished to spare your feelings, Madam," he said. "We have found it necessary to bleed Mr. Luxmore, and now, as I think he cannot bear much more just at present, we will loosen his iron corset, and Nurse will put him to bed."

Robina glanced at her husband.

"Good God! sir, he is insensible," she cried.

"By no means, Madam! he is only in a sort of doze, which generally succeeds an operation so painful as this has been; be quite easy—an hour or two of rest will restore him so that we shall reduce the rebel shoulder, and, I think, force down the crippled limb; in the

mean time I will beg a little supper at your fair hands. It is hard work for all of us."

"I will order you some refreshment," said Robina, with unspeakable disgust; "but I request that that torturing corset may be removed—I am sure it will kill him."

"No, no! my love!" groaned Mr. Luxmore, "I can bear it, indeed I can; do not undo all, and make my sufferings of no avail! I have known," he added, in a whisper, as she stooped to kiss his white lips—"much keener tortures than these, Robina—tortures you took no note of, though inflicted by yourself."

Weakened by his recent agony, the large tears gushed down his pale cheeks, and the Doctor saying, "this excitement is most dangerous for him just now, madam, indeed it is!"—Robina rose and left the room.

"Eva!" she cried, "my mind is made up—they will kill him; I send this instant for Dr. Hydrarg; that brute, led on by cruelty and cupidity, will be his death. Hark! do you

hear that groan? it decides me. The villain Grinlay has asked for some supper; while he is at table, I will get Hydrarg here. I fancy the butcher will make a hasty retreat before an orthodox physician of such high repute, and that Dr. Hydrarg will undeceive my poor Arthur as completely as that scoundrel has deceived him."

So saying, Robina left the room. In a little while the odious Grinlay was seated before a handsome supper. Robina was by her husband's bed-side, and Eva was carving for the odious Quack, who, announcing that his exertions had made him "uncommon sharp set," had just been helped to a plate of turtle-soup, and with tears of rapture was enjoying a large piece of green fat, when a footman opened the door, and said:—

"Dr. Hydrarg's compliments, and he will be here directly, madam!"

The Quack turned pale, even to the purple folds of his double chin; he started up, dashed away the napkin he had put on *à la bib*—ex-

claimed, "this is very unhandsome treatment, ma'am, and you'll have cause to repent it—the loss is yours, not mine—I never allow any other medical man to interfere in a case I undertake—I always consider it a signal affront, and resent it accordingly."

All this time he was hastily swallowing as much as he could of the turtle-soup, tossing off a tumbler of port, and removing his apron. He then hastened into the dressing-room, summoned his attendants, packed up his instruments of torture, and was about to remove his iron corset from Luxmore's emaciated and half-insensible form, when looking from the window, he perceived in the distance the lamps of a carriage, which was bowling rapidly along.

"You may thank yourself, madam," he cried, "that your husband will be a cripple for ever and a day; and you, Mr. Luxmore, you may thank your good lady there, for putting a spoke in the wheel. Dr. Brutus Grinlay is a man not to be trifled with. I presume, sir, as a man of

honor, you'll pay me what is still owing so me. You are in my debt, sir—another day will do!"

"Doctor, I beg"—faltered Mr. Luxmore, but half alive to what was going on; "do not leave this dreadful but important work unfinished, I implore you, Doctor!"

But the Doctor saw the lamps nearing, and having his own reasons for not braving a rencontre with Dr. Hydrarg, he made a sign to his myrmidons, and the whole detestable crew hurried away with their vile apparatus of torture, and dashed out of the park in their old post-chaise just as Dr. Hydrarg's carriage glided in.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MATERNAL VANITY.

Dr. Hydrarg was only just in time. A few hours more of the ineffable and useless torture the deluded Luxmore had undergone, would have ended his sad career.

It seemed that Dr. Brutus Grinlay had good reason to dread the advent of the celebrated and orthodox member of the faculty Dr. Hydrarg, for on two occasions the testimony of the latter had gone nigh to cause a verdict of manslaughter to be returned against the cruel, grasping, and remorseless Quack.

A long and dangerous illness was the result of Luxmore's credulous folly and mistaken fortitude, and the butcher Grinlay's barbarous operations. During this illness, a change came over Mr. Luxmore's mind; the scales fell from his eyes. He began to see Robina's character and his own delusions, more clearly than he had done before, and though, in the first excitement of horror and remorse, she had evinced some little of the natural feeling of the woman, and the anxiety of the wife, it was not an anxiety sufficiently deep, nor a tenderness sufficiently earnest, to stand the test of a long illness and a tedious watch. Long before Mr. Luxmore was recovered from the sufferings her heartless indifference had entailed on him, Robina was no longer humbled by his supposed indifference to her and admiration of Eva—no longer alarmed for her power or doubtful of her charms, but fully reinstated in her overweening opinion of herself, by this tragic proof of her husband's devotion.

Yes, even after such a lesson, "the Beauty"

was her own vain, egotistical, unfeeling self once more. She was the brilliant belle of the County, the reigning toast of those jovial days, when Bacchus was gallant enough to require that some daughter of Beauty should hallow every cup. Yes, the beautiful Mrs. Luxmore was the queen of every ball—admired, envied, followed, courted, abused, disparaged, censured, and even slandered; but such is the fate of a beauty.

The vanity instilled by the first silly nursery-maid, who taught her not to cry for fear of spoiling her pretty eyes, and not to play in the sun for fear of tanning her pretty skin, and not to romp for fear of spoiling her pretty frock, and to be a good girl that she might have a smart new hat and feathers, because she was a beauty, that she was—this vanity was now fostered by a train of coxcombs—fed as much by the women's hatred as the men's devotion; and the extraordinary loveliness of the little Angelina, instead of softening her heart by extending its affections to another and holier object,

only centred it more completely in herself. As a beautiful moss-rose is set off by a lovely bud, so did Robina consider that the charms of her little one added grace and dignity to her own. So every hour she could snatch from the adornment of her own person was devoted to the extravagant and almost ridiculous decoration of her child's ; and so finery and looking glasses were the first things the baby learnt from its mother to delight in, and beauty was the first thing it heard enthusiastically praised, and coveted, and discussed.

All this time Eva did all that she could do, without giving offence, to counteract in Angelina the fatal effects of being bred a beauty ; but her opportunities were few, for the child was a favourite *ornament* to the vain and silly mother. She never excited such admiration, nor elicited such applause, as when she appeared abroad with her exquisite little daughter, (already passionately fond of its pretty Mamma,) and never read such admiration in the eyes of

her levee of Coxcombs as when her beautifully drest, lovely child, slept on her bosom, or sported with her long ringlets.

During the first four years of Angelina's life, her poor father was principally confined to his dressing room. His health was very much impaired, his spirits frequently much dejected, and his poor form, owing to the villain Grinlay's cruel quackery, far more deformed and crippled than ever; but his heart was still the same—and a new and intense affection, holier, purer, and far more consolatory in its nature, than had been his love for Robina, had sprung up in his heart, for his beautiful and endearing little girl.

Gently considerate, and ever ready to sacrifice self, in all things, he did not like to take her from her mother, when the vain coquette wished, by showing herself with her child, to double the impression of her charms; indeed he did not suspect the motive which made her covet the company of her child so much—(for the truly generous and amiable seldom suspect the

motives of others) and so Mr. Luxmore attributed to maternal love, what owed its origin chiefly to vanity, and gave up, without a murmur, to Robina—who was wooed by pleasure in every shape, and whose life was now one round of amusements—the beautiful and endearing little companion, whose playful fondness and artless charms robbed seclusion of its ennui, and sickness of half its misery, and who often made his quiet room and lonely couch brighter and merrier than the gayest drawing-room, or the most gorgeous festival.

But Robina's selfishness did not stop here. She not only liked admiration, but liked that others should see, and that Mr. Luxmore should hear, how much she was admired; and so she often compelled the pale, pensive, and unwilling Eva to leave the book she was reading to poor Luxmore, or the task she was teaching in the delighted father's presence to the apt and lovely little girl, merely that she might have some one to whom she could boast of her conquests, nar-

rate her triumphs, and who could behold and report the power of her charms.

And this selfish and unfeeling conduct, Luxmore was more disposed to attribute to a wish that Eva should share her pleasures and her sports, than to any indifference to his comfort or forgetfulness of his loneliness. Robina adroitly implied that such was her motive, and her husband was too sincere himself and too amiable to doubt her.

Things were going on thus at Luxmore Park. Mr. Luxmore had gained strength enough to leave his couch, and to drive and walk a little. Robina had grown more vain and selfish than ever: for with the mind as the body, there is no stand-still; and if we do not improve, we inevitably deteriorate. Angelina was the most intelligent, warm-hearted, fascinating, and brilliantly beautiful little girl in the world, and would have been almost as faultless in mind and temper as she was in face and form, had she not, alas! been bred a beauty; but owing to

this real and great misfortune, Affectation was already beginning to blight her infantine graces—a consciousness of beauty to destroy half the charm of her sweet face—irritability to be engendered of the injurious excitement of too much praise—self to become too prominent in one who had inherited the unselfish nature of her poor father—and airs and feelings of self-importance, and glances that courted or challenged admiration, to spoil one of the most bewitching and perfect of all the little daughters of Vanity and Eve.

Miss Morris was little changed. Her regular and classic beauty was of a style to alter little in five years; and the beauties of her character, like those of her person, were of a lasting nature.

It was just at this time that the isolated situation and the constant lamentations of Robina's mother, Lady Mc.Grigor, affected the sensitive heart of her son-in-law; for, ungrateful and scornful as she had been to him, she was lonely

and unhappy, and he had sympathy with all who were so. Under pretence of business connected with some property near Edinburgh, Mr. Luxmore determined to visit the *ci-devant* beauty, and offer her again a home in his house; and it was just as he was about to accomplish this amiable object that we first introduced him to the reader. Our retrospect carried us so far in the life of one Beauty—a beauty of a former day—and we have gone at some length into its history, not only because, as the French say, “*La vie d’une jolie femme est toujours un roman*,” but because the faults, foibles, and peculiar situation of the mother, have so much to do with the education and position of our more decided heroine, the daughter. Having then traced that mother’s career, to the time when a mother’s influence for evil or for good is all-powerful over a daughter’s mind, we twine together the thread of the story of a heroine of the past and of the present day, and proceed to watch with a more lively interest, and perhaps a deeper

sympathy, the more eventful history of Angelina Luxmore, and the more interesting life of a beauty of the present day.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CI-DEVANT BEAUTY.

Five years of fretting, card-playing, and pecuniary difficulties had much diminished the well-preserved charms of the ci-devant beauty Lady Mc.Grigor; and Miss Miranda Mc.Dougal, who, for the sake of the gaieties of Edinburgh, still availed herself of the auld Leddy's chaperonage, had to put up with much conceit, vanity, and ill temper. Dr. Johnson says shrewdly enough, that it is difficult to grow old gracefully, and certainly to none is it so difficult as to a professed Beauty.

Miss Miranda was a greater sentimentalist and a greater scare-crow than ever, and not succeeding in securing the attentions, or arresting the admiration of gentlemen of her own class, Miss Miranda (we grieve to say it) so far forgot her own dignity, and that of the house of Mc.Dougal, as to make a hero of romance of a young haberdasher, at whose shop she cheapened ribbons, and to believe that a handsome hairdresser, who on state occasions curled her Brutus crop, was a nobleman in disguise.

Sir Davie Mc.Dougal had not worn the willow long. He had suddenly and privately married a very pretty young housemaid, (no other than our shrewd friend Shoozie) Robina's former attendant, whom Miss Mc.Dougal had herself engaged and admitted into the service of the last of the Mc.Dougals ; and who, during a long and painful fit of the gout, had nursed him (his elder sisters being laid up with rheumatism, and his younger one in Edinburgh) with so much gentle and cheerful skill, that he

resolved to secure her for life, and to bind her to him, not merely by the silken bonds of love and gratitude, but by the strong and lasting chain of wedlock.

When this appalling '*mésalliance*' came to the knowledge of the eldest Miss McDougal, her grief and rage were so violent that the bride was not safe in her presence; and while the eldest sister stormed and raved, the second sneered and sulked. Sir Davie, really good-natured, pitying their disappointment and distress, (for they had expected him to marry a Countess at least) could not find it in his heart (after so wounding their affection and their pride) to drive them from the home of their fathers; for they would much sooner have starved in a jail than have sat at their brother's board, if headed by her whom they persisted (in spite of her silk stockings and French shoes) to call a bare-legged, bare-faced hizzie, and a low-born serving wench. Sir Davie then, urged by his young wife, (whose position was

a painful one, and whose influence with her Lord was unbounded) determined to travel for a few years, to show his Shoozie something of the world, and to get rid of her rusticity and his own gout.

His sisters saw him depart in coldness and displeasure, but availed themselves of his generous permission to reside at the Castle, and commenced forthwith, a system of stinting and tyrannising over the females of the household, which they had never been able to effect in Sir Davie's time—he so resolutely opposed it.

Lady Mc.Grigor received Mr. Luxmore with no emotion ; her only care seemed to be to keep her back to the light, that he might not see the ravages five years of discontent and struggle had made in her beauty. She coldly acceded to his proposal, that in future she should make his house her home—stipulated for the services of her maid, Mrs. Betty, and her 'ain mon,' Marmaduke—observing that "they would be 'ama' expense' and great credit in ony esta-

blishment; and as for mysel," she added, "I gie na trooble, and for the motter o' expense, if Mrs. Luxmore will be guided by my experience, I'll save ye far mair than I'll coost. It's a great socrifice, Mr. Luxmore, to leave a' my friends, ond my country, ond a circle of which I may say, without vonity, I am the acknowledged centre; but I'm na' selfish, and aye forget to look after my ain interests, or else I'd na' be here the day."

Mr. Luxmore was bent only on doing his wife's mother a service, not on securing her gratitude; he knew she had been bred a beauty, and he marvelled not that she was thankless, and considered herself more than entitled to all that any one could do for her.

She was accustomed to Miranda's flattery and companionship; and inconsiderate about others, as the vain and selfish generally are, she said:—"My friend Miranda McDougal is mod to see London, sa I've pressed her to spend a few months with me there. Ye canna

object, I'm thinking, to sae weel-born, weel-bred, and canny a lass; ond I presume it's enoo' that she's my parteecular friend, and that, isolated as I'll be in the Sooth, I canna weel consent to part with her."

Mr. Luxmore did not at all like this proposal, nor the manner in which it was made. He could easily have refused to comply with an arrangement he disliked, and could justly have resented a liberty which displeased and disgusted him; but he was of too delicate, too generous, too chivalrous, too pitying a nature. He could not bear to wound any one, however offending, who was made sacred in his eyes by the benefits he was conferring, the protection he was extending, the comfort he was securing to her. He would not see in his mother-in-law, the vain, provoking, thankless egotist. He would look upon her only as a bereaved woman, a desolate widow, his wife's mother—and therefore to be cherished as if she were his own. A woman who had been a beauty, and who had

therefore felt all the delights of being loved, all the pride of conquest, all the fascination of power, all the self-reliance, all the confidence, all the vain but exciting interests, in the life of a beauty—and who now was a beauty no more!

Every Beauty is a sort of Queen, and every woman who *has been* a beauty is a deposed sovereign; how can she escape then, the ever haunting regret, aye, even the remorse of one who has known power, and abused its privileges; and, alas! who has not? But besides the loss of beauty, which is one of the many pitiful and unpitied woes of Vanity, Lady Mc.Grigor had lost her husband, her child's company, her home, her position, affluence, nay, even comfort; and therefore, ungracious and even offensive as was her conduct to Mr. Luxmore at this meeting, he would not allow himself to feel, much less resent it. And this is the spirit of Christianity, 'put in action.' The struggle and the triumph were known only to his own feeling and most generous heart. There are

deeds of showy virtue which make a great noise in the Christian world, and there are many men regarded as Saints on earth for their patience under suffering and their fortitude in trial; but, to my mind, Mr. Luxmore, when with a *real* tenderness, born of *true* charity, he kissed the cold cheek of his haughty mother-in-law, and told her that it would be his study to make her, and any she chose to bring with her, as happy as he could, he, did what was more pleasing in the sight of Heaven than many who do greater deeds, and offer up more palpable sacrifices.

"And sa my dochter is at a flower show then," said the Leddy. "Tell her, son-in-law, that in my young days, a show o' filial duty cam before a flower show."

"Talking of flowers," said Mr. Luxmore, (who hated even an implied disapproval of his very faulty wife) "there is no flower to my mind so fair as our little Angelina. I am sure you will be surprised when you see her."

“I doot thot, son-in-law—I’m na’ sa unused to beauty, I’m thinking—it was aye an ottribute o’ my family. In my ain young days, I was kenned far and wide as na ither than “The bonny blue belle,” but that was a tribute at once to my personal charms, and the accomplishments o’ a mind, far mair gifted and mair cultivated thon was common in my days. It’ll be a gude thing for your bairn, son-in-law, to be brought up under my een, I’m thinking.”

“There is nothing like example,” said Mr. Luxmore, evading a direct reply—“it is our first teacher ; we see and even note the conduct of others before we can understand their precepts.”

“Your bairn and my grand-daughter will want neither for precept nor exomple, sir, and it will be her ain fault if she prove not a very extraordinary person. Her mither would na’ hae turned out as she did, had I had my way ; but Sir Grigor was a’ for a foashionable school

in the Sooth, and I was a pottern wife for compleeance and offection. I wush I'd hod a better opeenion o' my ain judgment, and less o' his, puir mon; things would a' hae ganged anither gate; but I was aye for sacrificing mysel in a' things. I hae repented but ance, and that's my hail life. I'll dine with you to-morrow, and bring Miss Miranda Mc. Dougal; and tell Robina thot if I consent to mak her hoose my hame, it's for na convenience to mysel I do it, but to benefit her bairn and you—and that it hod been mair becoming, had she attended here to beg me hersel, to make sic a sochrifice; and noo I'm ganging to a tay-party wi' Miranda, sa I'll e'en say gude ev'n, son-in-law!"

The auld Leddy made a formal curtsey, to which Mr. Luxmore replied with a bow, low enough to satisfy even a ci-devant beauty; and when he was alone, he whispered to himself: "Her misfortunes are interesting, if she, alas! is not. I will not censure—I will not even

review her conduct; she has accepted my protection, and she is henceforth sacred in my eyes."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MIRANDA MC.DUGAL.

The Luxmores had elegant apartments at the first hotel in Edinburgh, and a very handsome dinner waited some time for the auld Leddy, and the fair Miranda. At length, from the drawing-room window Mr. Luxmore descried his mother-in-law, on foot, (though the day was wet) accompanied by Miranda, and followed by Marmaduke and Mistress Betty, the former carrying a parcel, the latter a bandbox.

The mixture of pride and penury touched

Luxmore's kind heart. The auld leddy on foot in the rain, and yet with so showy a footman behind her.

"Do you see your mother, my love?" he said to Robina, (who sate at another window, with Angelina on her knee, twisting round her fair and taper fingers, the long spiral ringlets of shaded gold, which hung on the lovely shoulders of the little beauty). "You see now that Eva and I were right, and that we ought to have sent the carriage. How vexed I am we did not."

"We should have had a long walk in the wet ourselves," pouted Robina, "for I had faithfully promised that Angelina and I would give Mctint a sitting to-day; besides mamma has only a few steps, as it were, to come—and"——

"Ah!" said Luxmore, playfully, "a few steps in the wet at your mother's age are more than as many miles to younger and stronger people."

"Well," retorted Robina, "you may be young and strong enough not to mind trudging two miles in the mud, but I own I am not."

All selfish people grow coarser as they grow older. This was the case with Robina; she often said things now, which she would not have dreamt of saying, in the greater delicacy and timidity of girlhood, and often fancied she was witty when she was only ill-natured and personal. Mr. Luxmore felt wounded, but he only said, with a sickly smile, "At any rate I am not an old woman, Robina."

"You grow something very like it," retorted Robina, coarsely. Some flatterers had persuaded her that she had a genius for repartee—a fatal delusion!

Eva looked up from a copy she was setting for little Angelina, and saw, with a sinking heart, Luxmore's lip quiver.

"Besides," added Robina, coaxingly—tying her child's sash, and gazing at it with maternal vanity—"the nasty rain would have got our

beauty's hair out of curl—wouldn't it, my pet? and wetted the little fairy feet, and spoiled Angelina's pretty new hat, and gay silk frock. Naughty papa, to want to get baby's pretty hair out of curl—wasn't he naughty, my beauty?"

"Shall I beat him, mamma?" lisped the child. "Naughty papa, to want to det my hair out of turl." And slipping off her mamma's knee, she ran up to Mr. Luxmore, and clenching her little rosy hand, began to pummel him in the back.

Luxmore looked round to reprove; but the comic wrath of her exquisite little face overpowered him, and catching her in his arms, he hid her face in his breast, and kissing her beautiful head again and again, said, "We spoil you, we spoil you, my child—and I am as guilty as any—and I shall weakly let it be thy curse, and mine, and the curse of all who love thee, that thou wert born and bred a beauty."

The seriousness of his voice arrested the child's attention, for she was accustomed only

to the sounds of flattery and cajolery. By nature sensitive and affectionate, his sad tone affected her little heart (though she knew not why); she looked up into his face, fixed on his, her large soft pellucid eyes, of violet blue, and gazing on him with that calm serious wonder peculiar to children, she said, climbing up on his knee, and pressing the rosy palms of her little hands, first on his pale thin cheeks, and then on his eyes: "Don't look to torry, dear papa! Andelina isn't very angry and won't beat dou any more; but dou must never do it adain; my hair must never det out of turl, because I am a beauty, you know!"

"But it isn't pretty to say you're a beauty!" said the papa, trying to be serious, and hugging her up in spite of himself, as he saw her pity, for what she believed to be his sorrow at having offended her; had sent a tear from the long dark lashes of her sloping eyes, to her downy and most roseate cheek—"No one will think you a beauty if you say so yourself."

"Isn't it true, den—and didn't lou tell Delina always to tell de trut?"

Mr. Luxmore was puzzled; he knew not what to say; but Eva, more accustomed to talk with children, said: "Yes, Angelina, when you're asked; but no one will ever ask you if you are a beauty, so you will never be obliged to say you are. Now I often think you are a very naughty little girl, but I don't often tell you so!"

"I'm not a naughty little girl den, Eva, oo nasty ting, oo ugly ting." And she rushed at Eva, her little hand raised for immediate vengeance. Eva seized both her hands.

"Isn't it naughty," she said, "to beat papa? Isn't it naughty to be so proud and so passionate? Isn't it naughty to slap poor Evy?"

By this time the little spoiled beauty, enraged at this restraint and these reproaches, had set up a succession of violent screams and roars; she struggled, stamped, and kicked, and finding all

this of no avail, she burst into a loud and passionate fit of crying.

Robina no sooner heard her sobs and saw her tears, than she came forth pale with anger.

"Really, Miss Morris," she said, "I'm not at all satisfied with your conduct to my child. Why she'll not be fit to be seen to-morrow—she'll spoil her eyes and complexion."

"Those are not the most important things that will be spoilt in her," said Eva, calmly.

"Oh, I despise all that nonsense," said Robina, vainly trying to pacify her darling.

"Girls who take care of their charms, and make the most of them, generally prosper, I believe, while those who only set up for moralists and prudes, are apt to sink into dependent old maids!"

"Mrs. Luxmore," said Eva, calmly rising to leave the room, and only betraying her emotion by the sudden pallor of her cheek—"you injure yourself far more than me, by language like this. If you are weary of my dependence,

believe me I am not less so, and now that from latent dislike you have proceeded to open unkindness, it is high time I should quit a scene, where, the wish to benefit your child has alone detained me; that object, now that you persist in breeding her up a conscious and professed Beauty, is of course impossible, and my occupation here is gone!"

"Stop, Eva! stop, I implore you," said Mr. Luxmore, coming forward, his eyes flashing, and an unwonted flush on his cheek—"Stop, Eva, I implore you—and you, Robina," he added sternly—for Robina, having snatched her sobbing child to her bosom, was hurrying away, to re-arrange its hair and its dress, before its grand-mamma's *entrée*—(that august lady and her friend Miranda having been shown into a dressing-room, to put on the finery they had brought with them)—"Stop, Robina, *I command you.*"

Robina turned pale and quailed, but did not disobey. It was the first time she had seen

her husband in a passion—the first time he had addressed her with a raised voice, and flashing eyes—the first time he had ever used the language of authority.

“Yes, Robina, I command you to apologize to our best and truest friend, our adopted sister, if so she will. permit me (most respectfully) to call her, for a rudeness and an ingratitude at which I know your better feelings will in a calmer moment revolt. And you, dear Eva, for the sake of those whom your own constant kindness and great benefits have made of some value to you, forgive the mother for the sake of the helpless child, already surrounded by all the perils which await, the fatal gift of beauty. Watch over her—protect, purify, and strengthen her—you, who though so beautiful, escaped the curse, of being bred a Beauty. God grant my girl may escape it too; but so far I plead guilty—I have lent a hand to my child’s ruin. But, by heaven! so heartless, so selfish, so frivolous, do I now consider

all conscious and acknowledged beauties to be, that I will do my best to prevent my Angelina from being bred a beauty; and in this great work I call on you, Eva, to help me. Robina, I expect you to express your deep regret, and to offer your hand to the truest friend of your child and ourselves."

Robina, weak and startled, saw there was no escape; she made a merit of necessity, and gracefully expressed her contrition, and embraced the amiable and forgiving Eva.

The affectionate but passionate child seeing this, stretched out her infantine arms, and held up her ruby little mouth, saying: 'Tiss me too, Eva! Delina'll be a dood little girl, indeed she will"—and just at this moment, a servant announced "Lady Mc.Grigor" and Miss Miranda Mc.Dougal. The auld Leddy, in black velvet and a Mary Stuart cap, (which the Duke of H. had admired in her youth), and Miranda, in a white frock, blue sash, coral necklace, Brutus crop, and with long black kid

gloves and red shoes, tripped in after her august chaperon, like a Farce after Tragedy, and with a mixture of playfulness and sentiment bounded into Robina's arms!

The dinner was a dull one; Eva was pale and thoughtful, Robina still felt a keen though hidden resentment towards Mr. Luxmore and the poor protégée; it was so new to her to be reproved, commanded, humbled by him; her bosom swelled with wrath and revenge whenever she thought of it. Mr. Luxmore, gentle and dignified as ever, had in his manner even an additional tinge of sadness; fear for his child's future destiny, was mingled with a sad conviction that his own might have been a happier one, had he never beheld Robina. Lady Mc.Grigor was out of humour, for her feet were damp; and Miranda had not only been disappointed when going to her favorite shop to get two yards of sixpenny ribbon changed; but her haberdasher beau, engaged with more profitable customers, had not waited on her: but

as misfortunes and disappointments never come alone, the young hair-dresser had been unable to attend her summons.

“Ye may e’en tak it as a great complement, dochter, my coming out the day,” said the auld Leddy. “I thought ye would ha’ mad a point to gie me a cast in the corriage, for I hae na’ my ain equipage in use just noo; my auld coachmon morried awa’ fra’ me, and its na’ thot easy to replace a mon in sic a troosty situation. As Lord Ogle said to me on the subject: ‘Ye hae too mony friends, ond,’ he was pleased to add, ‘admirers, Leddy Mc.Grigor, and are too completely the centre o’ a circle, to run ony risk, that might entail a great misfortune on sic a number;’ but when I remember me o’ the fomily coach, ond the six long-tailed, black horses, wi’ whilk I paid my visits in my younger days, I wonder at mysel that I can troodge alang in the mood, like ony tradesmon’s gude wife; ond I’m the mair conveenced o’ the notural humility o’ my disposition, a humility

whilk the world's homage, has na' been able to destroy, ond I canna but feel how great a prize pair Sir Grigor drew in the motrimonial lottery!"

"Ah—how could you ever make up your mind to marry?" sighed Miranda; "dearest Lady, it is a fearful step, to one who feels that, in making one happy, she must make so many miserable." And Miranda glanced at a waiter, good-looking and well-dressed, but evidently quite new to his situation and its duties, and who, not yet sufficiently accustomed to people's oddities to marvel at nothing, was wondering in his own mind whether Miranda was young or old, sane or insane, and what she meant by the coy glances she cast at him, and her affected simper.

"Wi' regard to making mony miserāble in occepting ain," said Leddy Mc.Grigor, "I canna say I fashed mysel mooch aboot it, lassie. Men mak fules o' sa mony o' my sex, thot I'm glod when ain o' us has charms eno' to poonish

a few o' them, and avenge the wrangs o' woman-kind. But eno' on this soobject; I hope, Robina, we'll see the wee lassie after dinner; I'm tauld she's a perfect beauty, and do not marvel at it, for beauty was aye an ottribute o' my family."

But at this moment, a piercing cry from Miranda startled the company. The inexperienced waiter, in putting a mould of ice on the table, destroyed the equilibrium of the quivering pyramid, and in trying to remove it, the dish slipped from his trembling hand, and the whole mass of ice fell on the neck and shoulders of the destined Miranda.

The poor waiter, crimson and appalled, stammered forth an apology. Miranda rushed out of the room, and Robina and Eva, in common good breeding, rose to follow and assist her.

They found her in the dressing-room, not engaged in removing the traces of the accident, but wringing her hands and weeping violently.



"Oh! Robina," she cried, "why did I come? Oh why! oh why?"

"Nay," said Robina, "do not take it so much to heart; being white, it will easily wash—there is no real harm done."

"What will wash? Oh! Robina, he must wash out this madness in his tears, perhaps in his blood; should Sir Davie ever know it; but what am I to do?"

"What ~~he~~ do you allude to?" asked Robina, fancying her guest must be insane; "I say the dress can be washed, and in the meantime I can lend you one."

"Oh, Robina," cried Miranda, "do you—my chosen friend, my confidante, my early companion—do you know me so little? Do you believe I weep thus over a paltry dress? Let me speak to you alone."

Robina looked rather unwilling, and felt almost as if a mad person had made the same request; but Eva, who found no delight in laughing at a fellow creature's absurdities, took

the hint, and returned to the drawing-room. Then did Miranda, having first closed and bolted the door, (a proceeding Robina did not at all like) exclaim:—"What I weep for, Robina, is that man's folly—that unfortunate's infatuation."

"What man?" faltered Robina.

"What man!" cried Miranda; "why that distinguished-looking being—that unhappy victim of a mad devotion—that *soci-disant* waiter!"

"That waiter! what waiter?"

"He who, to common eyes, might seem a waiter; but is to mine, some nobleman disguised. Oh, do not shake your head, Robina; such things have often been; I, alas! know too many instances of them; I"—and she cast down her eyes—"have been, alas! the fatal cause of so many similar, and, to me, harrowing disguises."

Robina could not help laughing.

"Ah, Robina!" cried Miranda, "do not lower yourself so much in my estimation; do

not laugh with the cold and heartless. Oh, this world ! this world ! I remember when my Robina had a tear for the woes of passion, and the sorrows of sentiment—when a tale of wild devotion, and unhappy love, would have called forth her tears, and not her smiles.”

“You allude,” said Robina, resolved, if possible, to look serious—“to the unhappy attachment you confided to me when at Mc.Dougal Castle. Is it at an end ?”

“In my heart it is ; in his I fear it is eternal now.”

“Do you mean, he is dead ?”

“Nay, I have no absolute proofs of his death ; but I do not think he can have survived my reproaches and those of his own conscience—I believe he is dead. And I wish that he had died worthy of Miranda’s love, for then I should only mourn him with a pleasing sadness.”

“But what did he do,” asked Robina, smothering her laughter with her handkerchief

—"to forfeit the very high opinion I know you had of him?"

"Ah, now," said Miranda, mistaking her laughter for tears—"now I recognise Robina—now can I unburthen my sad bosom of its weight of secret woe."

"First! let me ask, who was he? you never told me his name, or his position."

"At that time I knew it not myself. He took advantage of that ignorance to deceive me. Oh, so cruelly! and yet, Robina, I could have forgiven that deception, for Love prompts many such—Love 'which lays the shepherd's crook beside the sceptre.' But worse than his deceit—he was weak, Robina; another woman wooed him, and he forsook me—but to repent it bitterly."

"Then you have heard of him since?"

"Oh no!"

"How did you know then of his repentance?"

"A voice in my own heart suggested it, and

an echo said, 'Amen'—'Amen.' It was his favourite expression ; it was his deep, emphatic, sonorous 'Amen,' whenever I uttered a sentiment, or expressed a wish, that won my soul."

"Tell me then who he was, and how it ended. You say, when I was at Mc.Dougal Castle, you knew nor his name, nor his position."

"I blush to own it—I met him one day in a neighbouring village ; a troop of idle boys were near at hand, playing in a field ; he sate upon a fallen tree, and looked, Robina—he looked more than human, seated on that stump ! The idle boys molested your Miranda ; he flew to my succour, and drove them off with some weapon (I forget now what) but an efficient one, for they fled. I, blushing, thanked my preserver. We met again, again, and yet again. He told me he was poor, but nobly born—his name Fitz-Hodgeville—and that he was in the church. He wrote me many letters, in a hand an angel might be proud of. We met often,

too often, for at last I forgot what I owed myself, and that a poor parson was no fit match for Miranda Mc.Dougal. At his request I realised and confided to him what property I had, and I agreed to elope with him. Oh, Robina, when we parted upon that understanding, and I said, 'When next we meet, Fitz-Hodgeville, we meet to part no more'—he raised his fine eyes, and his wild and deep 'Amen!' awoke not merely all the echoes of the grove, but those of my maiden heart, besides."

"And then?" asked the curious Robina.

"And then, I saw him no more!"

"But did he carry off your property?" asked Robina, who was very matter-of-fact.

"I know not what became of it," replied the simple Miranda; "for a time I believe I was a maniac; besides my acquaintance with him had been clandestine, and I dared not even allude to it. What I believe is, that his fatal beauty, and his deep sonorous voice, induced some bold

adventuress to make those advances to him which your coy Miranda never would have dared. She probably beguiled me of his affections, and him of my funds, for he *was* disinterested and seemed scarce to see me or to heed me, when I put them in his pocket."

"And was he what he had represented?"

"Alas, no! I am ashamed to own, he was no Fitz-Hodgeville, but simply Mr. Hodge. Robina, he was in the church indeed, but not a clergyman; I blush to own he was nothing but a clerk!"

"No marvel then," laughed Robina, "at his wonderful, 'Amen.'"

"Enough of that!" said Miranda. "The boys from whom he rescued me, no wonder he could awe them—they were his village school! And yet, Robina, so devoted was I to this too fatal man, that clerk and schoolmaster as he was, had he but really been Fitz-Hodgeville, I would have followed him in beggary through the world! but enough of him. Since then,

your poor Miranda has been wooed by many—and in many disguises, she detects the daring lovers. Two have occupied her sad heart of late more perhaps than becomes its widowed state; one has condescended for her poor sake to the drudgery of a shop, merely to touch her finger as he matches the article she proffers—another, for the silly purpose of sporting with her tresses, assumes the hair-dresser—and now I see another victim in this waiter!”

Robina turned away to hide her mirth.

“Ah, weep, Robina,” she exclaimed; “but weep for me, not them. You must have marked his bearing, his fixed gaze, his inexperience, and finally his agitation; how can I meet his eyes again!”

“You must, and so the sooner the better. Let me ring for my maid to help you to dress. I fear I must now hasten back to mamma; she longs to see Angelina; remember my wardrobe is at your service, and if you really dread to

see that disguised adorer again, perhaps I can contrive to dispense with his attendance!"

"Oh no! oh dear no!" said Miranda, "do not trouble yourself, dear—I would rather awe than evade him. Let me not detain you."

Miranda longed to array herself in some of Robina's finery. Robina left her to the pleasing task, and hastened up-stairs in search of her little Angelina.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TOILET OF AN INFANT BEAUTY.

Robina found her child attended by her old nurse, (Mrs. Posset, whom the reader may remember at her birth) Bobinet, her mamma's maid, and Mademoiselle Fichu (her own.) These three silly women were all engaged in adorning and flattering the little Beauty, whom they had placed on an ottoman opposite a cheval glass, and who seemed already to take a coquettish pleasure in gazing at the charms they so lauded.

The mother (vain fool!) was pleased rather

than shocked at the scene which met her view, as she opened the door; Bobinet was fastening a tiny pearl buckle into the white satin slipper of the infant Beauty, who stamped her little foot with impatience; Mademoiselle Fichu was trying, with some odious French pommade, to confine to one formal boundary the rich masses of the Beauty's golden hair. The old nurse was tying the broad silk sash that marked the little waist.

"Well," said Bobinet, affecting not to see Mrs. Luxmore—"you sweet darling little beauty! you do take arter your mar, that's for certain—a more perfect cherubim I never did see!"

"I'll kick off my shoe if you're any longer," cried the impatient child; "and I'll kick dou—I want to go and see de company, and mamma wants me, because I'm such a beauty, you know!"

"Ah that you be!" cried the nurse, "you blessed little hangill; and I'm glad you knows

you're sich a beauty ; then perhaps you won't go for to throw yourself away some of these days ; have a proper pride in your pretty self, my pet, and then you'll make a good market of yourself ; look in the glass, and then you won't go for to stoop and pick up nothing. Why, goodness gracious, patience from Heaven, if there aint Missus, a listening to all my nonsense ; but I can't help telling the baby what a Beauty she is."

"*Ah non !*" said Fichu, "*Il faut bien qu'elle le sache la petite coquette ! elle est belle à miracle ! n'est ce pas mon choux, tu es bien jolie ? n'est ce pas m'amour ?*"

"*Oui, ma bonne,*" lisped Angelina.

As her mamma proudly examined her darling's dress—"I see nothing amiss here," she said at length, after a close scrutiny, "except that that bow is rather large, Nurse ! and I think, Fichu, you might tie her hair with blue bows."

"*Ah, Madame, a bien raison !*" said the

French maid ; "*le bleu c'est le fard des blondes—Madame est adorable, avec cette couronne de bleuets, et cette robe bleu de ciel—et Mademoiselle tient de Madame un teint de lis et de roses.*"

"*Taisez vous, ma bonne Fichu,*" said Robina, evidently much pleased.

"And, Bobinet, put on her little blue French shoes—they make her feet look smaller still."

"Oh, dese will do !" said the wearied child ;
"dese blue shoes hurt my toot."

"No, dearest child, they fit you exactly ; come, be a good girl—it is so pretty to have a very small-foot, my beauty !"

"But it isn't tomfortable," said the child.

"Lor bless her heart," said the old nurse,
"no more it 'taint. Dont'ee pinch up her little feet, ma'am—it'll only spoil 'em—now dont'ee !"

"Nurse !" said Robina, with all the dignity of a mother—"never interfere in these matters, I beg ; if there is one thing more than another

that I dislike and despise in a woman, it is—a large foot! Now let me see if all is right. Is her hair thoroughly brushed?"

"I brushed it myself, ma'am, for two hours," said Bobinet.

"Her eyes seem a little red—I hope she hasn't been crying or poring over that stupid primer?"

"La, bless ye, ma'am, her eyes be as bright as diamonds, and as like yourn as two peas."

"I think she is a little tanned, nurse!" cried the mother, with real alarm.

"Tanned, ma'am, why the blessed babe has a double veil, and a parasol held over her whenever she goes out."

"A nasty veil," said the child; "I can't breathe, mamma. Let me go down—I want to see papa, and Eva, and grandmamma, and the lady, and to have a cake and strawberries."

"You must eat nothing but what I give you, my beauty; eating sweet things will make you ugly."

"Come, come, mamma!" said the little impatient fairy, dancing on before—"there, do have done, nurse!"

"Stop, my love, walk prettily, like a young lady, and a beauty—don't romp—don't get your hair out of curl."

"Has she taken her lesson of Monsieur le Zephyr, Fichu?"

"Oui, Madame, et il m'assure que Mademoiselle profite beaucoup et qu'elle danse déjà comme un ange."

"Very well, then all is right—I am quite satisfied; if she looks beautiful and dances well, she will do," laughed the vainest of vain mothers.

"Oui, Madame, a tant d'esprit la beauté et la danse, voilà tout ce qu'il faut, avec cela on peut devenir, Madame la Duchesse."

The auld Leddy, who had not seen her grand-child before, was a little startled out of her coldness and hauteur by the uncommon beauty of the little fairy, who, with a frank kind

of fascination, lovely in all, but irresistible in a beauty, went up to her, and putting her little hand into her grandmamma's, said: "I love you because you're grandmamma; will you love me? everybody loves Delina, because I'm a beauty!"

"She's exactly what I was at her age," said the old lady, actually lifting the child into the lap of her damask satin dress. "Why she'll be the belle of her age, as his grace the Duke of H—— was pleased to say I was. Robina, I congratulate you! Beauty is the greatest treasure woman can possess—for Beauty is power, influence, wealth, consequence, and she added, curling her lip, love for those who profess sentiment, which I own I never did. Robina, you are a happy woman—your child is a perfect Beauty—you were a pretty girl—but your little one is what I was myself. I shall take a great interest in her, and I do hope she will indeed make the most of such extraordinary advantages. Education will do a good deal,

but I do not wish her sent to school. You," she whispered to her daughter—"you did pretty well, but I believe brought up under my own eye, you would have done much better; instead of a wealthy commoner, you might now be a wealthy peeress. I hope Angelina will aspire to the strawberry leaves at least!"

"Oh, I hope so!" fervently ejaculated the mother.

Poor little Beauty! at this moment she was much more intent on the strawberries than on the strawberry leaves; but each age has its object, and the Beauty of four, wept as bitterly when her mamma, urged by her grandmamma, took away her strawberries, lest fruit should injure her complexion, as a belle of nineteen might weep in secret if she saw the leaves she had plotted for and pined for, snatched from her grasp.

"Thank Heaven!" thought Eva, who fondly loved her, "she is so much and so really a child that their destructive praises of her beauty

cannot console her for the loss of her strawberries. I had rather see her greedy than vain, for at any rate the former fault is natural to her as a child."

And while Lady Mc.Grigor and her daughter discussed together future plans for the Beauty's aggrandizement—and Mr. Luxmore formed a counterplot for her education as a rational being—Eva stole quietly to the nursery, whither, for the sake of her looks, her mamma had sent her to bed; and dismissing Fichu and Mrs. Posset, who were glad enough to go—the former to her "*tasse de café*" and French novel, the latter to her tea and "leastest drop of rum"—she tried, with a gentle patience and an earnest love, to root out all the vain and worldly lessons of the day, and to plant in their stead the seeds of piety and truth and virtue. She told the little one, who to all other gifts added the dangerous one of genius and its hand-maid, lively fancy, many a pretty story,

proving the worthlessness of being beautiful, and the merit of being good.

"But I am a beauty, you know, Eva," lisped the child, with a fascination and expression which almost made Eva catch her to her quiet heart, so exquisite did it make that beauty—"I am a beauty, you know; I tant help dat; but I'll be a good girl too!"

"Yes, God grant it! God in his mercy grant it!" faltered Eva, her tears gushing forth over the child's upraised face. "And now what did Delina promise Eva never to forget?"

"To say my prayers every night and every morning; and so I will—only don't cry—come, I'll say them now."

And kneeling in Eva's lap, with clasped hands, and face resting on her best friend's bosom, the little child prayed—as I would we could all pray. Too young to have erred much—too young, to doubt, to cavil, to *investigate*, or rather to *darken*!—Innocence and Faith, these were in the little one's heart—Innocence

which can only rise to virtue when it has been sorely tried—and Faith which taught her to believe lips that she felt could never lie. And the wisest of wise men, after the study of a life, could do no more than that little child, namely, believe what he can never understand. Happy, thrice happy, if his science and his lore bring him to her wisdom !

With the Saviour's name upon her lip, our little one fell asleep. And oh, we will not quite despair even of a Beauty—even of Angelina, born and bred a beauty—if through life, its many temptations and its many trials, she preserve the one habit instilled at this early season by poor Eva Morris—the habit of giving her last waking thought to Heaven ; in other words, of closing the noisy, garish, and beguiling day, with those best vespers, the prayer of Innocence and Faith.

END OF SECOND VOLUME.

T. C. NEWBY, PRINTER, MORTIMER STREET.



THE
LIFE OF A BEAUTY.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Filt," "The Breach of Promise,"
"Cousin George," "The Marrying Man," "The
Match-maker," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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1846.

THE
1877
OF A REVOLUTION

A NOVEL

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THE LIFE OF A BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

THE FLIGHT OF TIME.

Years rolled on, and Time brought its wonted changes. The proud were grown prouder—the vain were grown vainer—the cold, colder—the false, more false—the weak, weaker—the ugly, uglier—the old were older than ever—and even many fair were fair no more! on the other hand, the true were truer—the kind, kinder—the good, better—waning stars were set for

ever, and crescent moons were reaching their full. Among the old who had grown older, and the proud, prouder, Lady Mc.Grigor took a foremost place; among the weak who were weaker, Miranda Mc.Dougal figured; among the vain and false, we find Robina; and among the good and true, who were better and truer, Eva Morris, and Mr. Luxmore.

In the hospitable home of the latter, Lady Mc.Grigor, and her constant companion, the romantic Miranda, ~~had now~~ principally resided for some years. No kindness, no forbearance, no courtesy, and no true Christian charity, (in its most general sense) had been wanting in the noble-hearted Luxmore, towards his very haughty, thankless, and egotistical mother-in-law, and his coquettish and heartless wife; but each born and bred a beauty, in her own generation, received every undeserved token of his goodness, as a tribute due to her own merit, and the opinion of each was not how much *he* gave, but how much more she deserved.

Eva Morris, still lovely, and among the good who were even better, had glided naturally and quietly into the preceptress of the young Angelina; and though her mother, her grandmother, and all her misnamed *friends*, did their utmost to poison with flattery her young heart and mind, Eva and Mr. Luxmore had done so well, that at fourteen, more lovely in person, and in talent more admired and more flattered than any other dawning beauty of the day, she was not quite spoilt.

Brilliancy of intellect, and genuine warmth of heart, which lend even to a moderately pretty woman, a beguiling and inexplicable fascination, united with the rare loveliness of the young Angelina to make her ineffably and irresistibly bewitching. With far, far more personal beauty than her mother (even in her best days) could boast, she had the soul, the sentiment, the fine brow, and the deep and eloquent eyes of her father; and added to these rare and real charms, she had caught a

something of the gentle dignity and feminine elegance of the quiet Eva Morris. Not but what the yainity of the petted and courted beauty, would constantly laugh and sparkle out of those exquisite eyes—and then she was a younger and a lovelier Robina; but a word sadly kind from Eva, a mournful glance from her poor, her fond and invalid father, would change the saucy glances for the large tears—the rich rose of her cheek for the lovelier snow-drop—and bring her to her father's arms, or her friend's bosom—a fairer and more bewitching Eva.

Though some years were wanting of the time appointed for the introduction of the Beauty into the "British World of Fashion," she was already celebrated. Portraits of Angelina Luxmore, under the names of "THE ROSE UNIQUE," and "L'ANGE AUX YEUX BLEUX," and "THE YOUNGEST OF THE GRACES," had already smiled from the print shops, delighting her mother's vain heart, and offending her

father's better taste. Whenever she walked out, she was gazed at, pointed out, followed; a little crowd would press round her, when in early girlhood, with the heart of a child, but too much of the stature of the woman for her years, she delighted herself with the toys and baubles of the bazaars; and the innocent and young delight she took in "*seeing*" was soon exchanged for a far more questionable pleasure in "*being seen*." How early, alas! her interest in looking at a doll, was exchanged for a coquettish satisfaction in the comments, the gaze, and the glances of those who were only emptier and more pernicious puppets. How early she wished to discard the frilled trowsers, the sash, and the round hat, which stamped her a child—and how already she longed for the time when she might openly receive all that homage which now was only paid her by stealth, and under the sanction of her being "a child." And a child, her vain mother was now anxious she should be, as long as possible.

For as her own beauty and youth
anxiety about her rank as a *belle*.
She was vain indeed of her daughter's
ing loveliness, but she felt nothing
mother's natural and sublime delight
moting that daughter's making the
mate and noble use she might, of the
of beauty—namely, the securing,
freshness was gone from her own cheek
own feelings, an honest heart at
home. Robina was always on the point
make her daughter out younger than
because she hoped thereby to take
in the world's opinion, from the ye
lating faster than she wished upon
head.

She could not deny herself the
seeing Angelina admired, of seeing
pletely eclipse many an envied *belle*.
whenever she had company (and
whenever she did not dine out,) she
appeared at dessert, and the m

thought that all the gay men and connoisseurs in beauty whom she fancied allured by her own attractions, bore with the long dinner for the sake of the brief half-hour, during which Miss Luxmore was allowed to come down and take half a glass of wine and half an orange, or a couple of strawberries. It was a very awkward position for a very womanly girl of fifteen, and nothing but the natural grace, tact, and loveliness of Angelina, could have carried her through it.

Her mother too, for the sake of her own juvenility, would have her daughter dressed à *l'enfant* on these occasions. She did not know, that with her scarlet silk sash, her embroidered trowsers, and her rich hair, hanging braided to its full length and tied with ribbons, Angelina looked far more like a young sultana, or a favorite Odalique, than an English child.

Most vain, most heartless, and most frivolous the Beauty must have become, under the guidance of Lady Mc.Grigor and her daughter, but

for Eva and Mr. Luxmore. And even as it was, it is so much more easy to learn folly than wisdom—so much more pleasant to yield to vanity than to resist it—so much more beguiling an occupation to the young girl's heart, to dress, and flaunt, and smile, and be admired, than to think, and study, and stay at home and be esteemed—that in spite of mornings in Mr. Luxmore's dressing-room, and solid reading to the poor invalid beside his couch—and in spite of sweet counsels and evening confessions with Eva Morris—Angelina the Beauty was, at sixteen, alas ! a Coquette !

Not a Coquette in the worst acceptation of the word—not feigning love for the purpose of winning it—not deliberately delighting in another's anguish, repaying truth with perfidy, and devotion with scorn—not degrading the innocence of girlhood and the dignity of her sex, by making advances and courting homage ; but still delighting to receive it, still preferring flattery to truth, the admiration of the Many to

the esteem of the Few—often leaving her tried and devoted friend Eva Morris, for the interested praises of envious, but yet flattering, women, who accepted the generous girl's presents, and wished to be always asked to her mother's parties—still more fascinated by the idea of being a brilliant star, to dazzle and to shine in public, than a calm and holy light to enliven and to cheer some dear and quiet home.

The only person, who, though not at all blind to Angelina's beauty, and even more keenly alive to the rarer graces of her mind and manners, and endearing tenderness of her warm though faulty heart, was a young man distantly related to Mr. Luxmore—very poor, but dignifying poverty by a modest pride and noble self-dependence. They had been play-mates in infancy—had Angelina Luxmore and George Darnly; they had been companions in childhood; and Mrs. Luxmore had so great a dread that they might become lovers in youth,

that she had contrived cruelly to wound George Darnly's mother, and that was indeed to wound and offend himself.

Poor George ! he had much to struggle against ; that mother whom he loved so well, he had reason to fear, when he grew old enough to reason as well as to feel, that she had little claim on that love—and on his respect none ! The story went that a cousin of Mr. Luxmore's had wooed and won her ; it was the old tale—marriage promised, ruin only realised, woman weak, and man ungrateful ; but Amy Darnly was poor and of low estate ; her lover was of a high and haughty family ; they called themselves proud and far above such an union, they forbade it, threatening him with their curse.

They found out, however, that he was often seen in disguise lurking in the neighbourhood of poor Amy's home, but he talked of marriage and maintenance no more to them, and they forgave him. They could forgive a son, even

if he meanly deceived and seduced a poor confiding girl, but they must have disowned one who married beneath him! for they were of this world. Well, as the old story ever is—and as this was whispered too—first came the Love that conquers Shame, and then the Shame that conquers Love; in other words, Amy loved and became a mother, and shame drowning the mother's instincts in her heart, she concealed the birth, and caused the child to be left one day in a bower in Luxmore Park, where the first object on which it opened its large, dark, wondering eyes, was Mr. Luxmore—our friend.

He guessed the story, for he knew something of his cousin and of this poor Amy.

His cousin was serving with his regiment abroad. Mr. Luxmore determined to write to him, to see Amy, and in the meantime to have every care taken of the little one. It was very early morning, when, being (as the unhappy generally are) a very early riser, he had dis-

covered this child, well wrapped up, and lying on the seat. He determined to go to the house and fetch a woman to attend it, when he thought he saw a rustling among the trees; and in a moment more he heard hurried steps. Hastily concealing himself, he watched; it was poor Amy: pale as the dead, her long hair wet with the morning dews, and misery in every feature, she came back; a thousand fears and misgivings had beset her mother-heart directly she could see the bower, where she had left her child, no more. Love again triumphed over Shame, and she came to carry it away with her, and with it to face the cold and jeering world.

“I cannot leave thee, poor outcast!” she cried, sinking on her knees beside it, and snatching it to her bosom; “the world will brand thy mother—judge, condemn unjustly, if it did but know my story; yet still it will condemn and punish; but I am thy mother still, and I cannot leave thee, even to the chance of

being fostered by the best, the noblest of men!"

She covered the child with her mantle and hurried out. Mr. Luxmore, too delicate and considerate to surprise her, waited till she was moving through the shrubbery, and then he joined her. He spoke in words of pity, and she wept—the first refreshing, cooling tears she had wept for months. He promised protection and help, and he spared her the anguish of telling her story.

He never forsook her; he secured her a small competence, and placed her in a cottage of his own and on his own estate. Robina, who soon, when she dwelt at Luxmore Park, found out the beautiful recluse, admitted her to a sort of half acquaintanceship, partly from curiosity, partly from a love of patronage. Mr. Luxmore, in those days of delusion, believed she did it from the overflowings of an innocent heart; and that she might not in ignorance encourage an intimacy she might in after years and ripen

experience condemn, he told her poor Amy's story. Robina wished to seem only too amiable and too unworldly, besides she found much amusement in poor Amy's society, in her sweet and untutored wit—while her boundless admiration for, and devotion to, her beautiful patroness, flattered the selfish Lady of Luxmore Park.

The boy, too, was a source of great amusement to the somewhat childish Robina; he was a lovely, amusing, frank little fellow of five years old. When first she saw him, she delighted to play with the rich curls of his dark brown hair, and to see his large eyes, (of that most expressive of all colours, iron gray,) sparkle through their long black lashes. She liked to hear his arched and ruby lips call her "The Beautiful Lady!" and she delighted in dressing him out in fanciful finery, just as a few years before she had drest her doll.

All this was very kind, and graceful, and pretty, and looked so innocent, so inexperi-

enced, and contrasted so prettily with Eva, who though she deeply pitied, could never become very intimate with one she could not but look upon as a fallen sister; for Robina took care she should know the story as she had heard and believed it. But if Eva rather avoided the mother, she grew intensely fond of the noble and endearing boy, whose birth she felt would one day be so terrible a curse to his ardent spirit and sensitive heart. She tried to teach him a sort of prospective resignation to the ills that she knew must await him. Alas! in opening his mind, she also refined his taste and his feelings; and when he talked of being one day a great and good man, and of marrying his beautiful little playfellow Angelina, Eva could have wept over him. And the little girl was very, very fond of George Darnly; he was just the daring, manly, resolute boy to captivate a female fancy of any age—so rashly brave, so indifferent to pain and danger, so bold in spirit, and so strong in body. He had

an influence over the little spoiled Beauty greater than even Eva's or Mr. Luxmore's, and often she would do for George Darnly what no one else could obtain from her in any way.

The intimacy of her little girl with this ill-fated but most endearing boy, never struck the silly Robina with any alarm, till Angelina, after a long absence, returned, almost a woman in appearance, to Luxmore Park—and George Darnly, who had gone out as a cadet, (Mr. Luxmore's interest having procured him a cadetship) came home to see his mother, who was very ill. The first morning George Darnly called as usual at the great house, and Angelina awaited him with a coquettish impatience, to show off to her earliest admirer her heightened beauty, her acquired graces, fashionable accomplishments, and London finery. She was a little withdrawn from her vain delight in herself, by a feeling of the even greater change a few years had made in George; his military training had so marvellously improved his per-

on, his air, and his manners. The world, the riddy heartless world of the thoughtless and the young, had taught him who and what he was—a cruel lesson; such knowledge would have made a meaner nature humble, cringing, complaisant; it had made George Darnly reserved, proud, and in some degree repelling.

He came to see his beautiful playmate of happier days, perhaps with something more than the emotion of former times, but without the same happy ignorance of their relative positions. He must take his tone from her. If she, too, was now sensible of the distance between them, he would make her still more so, and any future intimacy must be entirely of her seeking. Angelina had acted over again and again to herself this first meeting with George; she had heard he was grown a very handsome young officer, and she had no doubt he would be desperately in love with her; for before he went abroad, there was no tree he would not climb to look into a nest for her, if

she only wished to know what was in it; he would plunge into any water, however deep, to get her a lotus or a water-lily; he would walk any distance in any weather to gratify any caprice of hers; and if he would do all this when she was a mere romp, and he a boy, what would he not do now that she was a finished belle—an accomplished enchantress—a perfect beauty, with all the aid of dress and fashion, and manner.

She had intended to be rather stately—to play off some town graces—to talk to him at first, not of old times, but of new fashions—and then if he was very much cut up indeed, if he burst into tears, as the wayward boy had sometimes done in former days, when she teased him past endurance, then she would be his little Angelina again, and roam with him through all their old haunts, and teach him the new dances, and run races with him as of yore, and row on the river, and play at hide and seek with him, (for there was a good deal of

the child about her still—there always is in any one gifted or cursed with genius and a heart.) She was still in some respects an unworldly girl; if she had decided on assuming a proud, distant manner towards George Darnly, it was not with any reference to the accident of their births and positions—it was not to show her grandeur as the heiress of Luxmore Park—but her rank as the beauty of the day.

However, George could not know this—George had lately found so many ready to visit on him the faults of his parents, that he was accustomed to trace every slight to his unhappy birth.

Angelina expected George would rush in, as in former years, to catch her in his arms, and kiss her again and again; and she had prepared a dignified surprise, a graceful evasion, and a polite wave of her hand to motion him to a seat. She had awaited him for some time, dressed to the greatest possible advantage, and looking lovely beyond description; she began

to grow impatient and angry at his long delay. In former days he was always before his time, but then he had the happy confidence of ignorance ; now he did not feel that he came a welcome equal to his darling little playmate. He came worse than humbly born, and her father's protégé—an outcast of the world ; on Angelina it must depend whether he ever came again.

At length a martial step, unlike George Darnly's bound, made the Beauty's heart beat. The door opened, she appeared not to hear it, and sate in a graceful attitude, which she had studiously assumed to show off the beauties of her form and the folds of her drapery:

George Darnly drew near. He did not take the opportunity of her abstraction to fold her to his heart. He approached, and after contemplating for a moment an increase of loveliness which startled even himself, he said, calmly extending his hand: "Will Miss Luxmore allow me the honour of renewing her acquaintance?"

Startled by his voice, and the cold touch of his hand, Angelina looked up, and rising with that involuntary deference all women feel for men who respect themselves, she said: "I should rather have expected Mr. Darnly to speak of renewing our intimacy than our mere acquaintance."

Her eyes met his, as she spoke; she looked at him with surprise. The laughing, careless gaze, the roseate bloom, the gay self-abandonment, of his youth were gone; his eyes were full of thought, his complexion at that moment very pale, his manner reserved, his expression that of a proud humility; but as this change in him, (awakening some strange woman instinct in her heart,) sent the tears to her most beautiful eyes, and drove the soft rose from her lovely cheek, poor George forgot all his former resolutions, all his experience, all his philosophy.

"Oh, Angelina!" he said, "am I still to be indeed the friend of former days? May I still

call the Home of the Universe, the Jewel of the World, my little wife?"

The Beauty saw her power—the Coquette resolved to exercise it. He had thrown his arm round her; she drew herself away.

"Nay, Mr. Darnly," she said, "these country fashions do not suit us now we have been better taught—I think you are over-bold indeed! I am not now the little wild romp—I am Miss Luxmore, sir—already accustomed to no little respect, believe me—Miss Luxmore, who, being accustomed to the deepest deference and humblest devotion from the nobles of the land, is not going to encourage the familiarity of—a young officer!"

"Of an outcast!" said George, bitterly.

At this moment, Bobinet came from Mrs. Luxmore, to request Miss Luxmore to come to her immediately, as she wanted her in her room for the rest of the morning. George had walked to the window; he was looking out.

Angelina was very anxious to see his face,

but he did not give her an opportunity. He took his hat. Angelina's heart misgave her.

"Don't go, Mr. George," she said; "I will be back directly—Mamma does not know you are here."

She tripped out of the room. George bowed—how graceful, how dignified, was that bow! Angelina hastened to her mother. She found the auld Leddy Mc.Grigor and Mrs. Luxmore closeted together in the boudoir of the latter. They had been discussing the impropriety of suffering any intimacy to exist between the beautiful heiress and the low-born George Darnly. Angelina heard all they had to say—the haughty opinions of the auld Leddy, the vain counsels of her heartless mother. She assumed an indifference she was far from feeling, and, with the instinct secrecy of her sex where any real preference is concerned, she spoke as if she were at least as ambitious and as vain as themselves; and so well did she disguise the dawning love of which

perhaps even she was scarcely aware, (so suddenly had it unfolded one of its pale immortelles in the midst of all the gaudy flowers and weeds of her heart) that both agreed she must in common politeness, and not to make an enemy, return to say good morning—to invite him to dinner—and to show even in her courtesy, her indifference and contempt.

“She’s the pottern o’ mysel,” said the suld Leddy proudly, as she left the room; “I’ve na’ taken sa mooch pains wi’ her for naething. She’ll be a Dutchess yet, as I mysel might have been, hod I na’ been too humble-minded and too little o’ a manœuverer for this intriguing world!”

“I hope she will make the most of her singular beauty!” sighed the mother. “I am sure it ought to secure her all the blessings of life—a title, a splendid fortune, a noble settlement, a first-rate equipage, opera-box, set of diamonds, and all the minor etcetera of wealth. She is well trained—she despises this base-born

boy as much as we do ; of course he will be madly in love with her, and it will be some fun, till she comes out, and he might be a detrimental, to watch his agonies, now I see that she is safe."

Angelina was hurrying down stairs on her way back to George Darnly, whom she longed to tease a little more by her coquetry, dazzle by her beauty, irritate by her scorn, and then soothe by her kindness. As she passed the virgin bower of Miranda Mc.Dougal, she heard two or three loud deep sighs, and then her own name. Miranda came to the door. She still wore her hair in a ringlet crop, but it was thin and very grey. She was almost a skeleton with perpetual sentimental fretting ; and a constant habit of weeping had made her eyes very weak. She was attired in a white wrapper, round the demi-train of which (for she still sported a demi-train) she had worked in green worsted, a wreath of weeping willow ; a green fillet bound her brow. Old

romances, and an embroidery frame, were on her table. She was working a gorgeous monument to Early Love, in white worsted, on a black ground, with an elaborate border of everlasting flowers. A willow and a cypress were in tubs in her room, and several bouquets of immortelles adorned her mantel-piece.

“Angelina!” she said, wiping away her tears—“I have been present at a discussion between your grandmother and your mother; they have, alas! no soul, no sentiment! They know nothing of the delicious joys of sensibility, the pleasing pangs of love. Do not listen to them. Oh, Angelina! behold in me the victim of an early disappointment, the wretched sacrifice of my own coy and maidenly reserve. If you love—love not wisely, but too well!—be sure it is the oasis of life’s wilderness—the lote tree of the desert—it is the all in all of life! Oh, my Fitz-Hodgville! shade of my first love! Oh, that when I warn this maiden not to be like me, I could hear through the vista

of the past, thy deep Amen. Another day, my Angelina, I will tell thee the tale of my life; but now I only say, if you love, sacrifice on the rosy altar of that sublime affection, all! yes, all! Would that I had done so. Go, go!"

Angelina, stifling her laughter, went. Poor Miranda was now insane—a harmless lunatic, and therefore under no restraint, but sentiment mad.

As Angelina left the room, she met Eva Morris. Eva Morris was now a beautiful woman of two-and-thirty—dignity in her step, reflection on her brow, and every virtue in her feeling heart.

"A word with you, my own Angelina," she said.

"Well, only one," laughed Angelina, "dearest Eva; for George Darnly is waiting for me."

"Exactly. Angelina, you could never make up your mind to marry a man of no fortune,

low birth, and looked down upon by the world—could you?"

"Oh no, of course not, Eva!"

"Then, do not try to win his heart; he's a good, a noble creature; but he is miserable enough without having to add to all his other sorrows, that keenest, that most incurable—hopeless love!"

Forego the petty pride of giving pain,
Nor think that conquest justifies disdain."

Angelina laughed, but the tears were in her eyes. She kissed Eva, and hurried to the drawing-room.

George Darnly was gone!

CHAPTER II.

FIRST LOVE.

The beautiful Angelina could not believe that George Darnly was really gone. She looked anxiously round the room, then hastened to the glass, and was re-assured. She thought he must be hiding as in happier days, when he often did so in sport, for the pleasure of surprising her. He was hiding, it is true, but not there; he had rushed from the house, sped through the park, and when he had gained a wood, beyond the boundary of Mr. Luxmore's estate, he had thrown himself on the

ground, and wept some of the bitterest tears that ever welled from a young and disappointed heart.

Again and again he vowed to forget. Alas! that is always the sure way to remember. How very beautiful, how graceful, how dignified, she was! How fresh and flower-like was her loveliness! how full of soul were those bewildering eyes! How unlike all the pale, faded, and forward Misses of the balls in India, worn out with the heat of the climate and perpetual flirtation: women who had so smiled upon him till they knew his story, and then had so heartlessly avoided or cut him.

Poor George! in the miserable excitement of disappointment and mortification, he formed a thousand rash schemes; in each and all some prompt and violent death was to be his refuge. He would woo Danger and wed Death, and his dearest hope was that Angelina might weep over his early grave, and its blighted laurel. The shades of evening found him still stretched

on the cold damp ground. The moon came out and looked calmly upon him with her eternal smile, bright and cold alike for the triumphant and chosen bridegroom of beauty and the miserable and disappointed outcast.

At length he thought of his mother; and though with the thought came much shame and much anguish, he remembered her long and boundless love, her wild anxiety, and intense devotion; he remembered that she had nothing but himself to shield her from a cruel world; and he rose to go home.

He found his mother in high spirits. Mr. Luxmore had been to call on her son, and had invited him to dine at the House the next day. He had read to the poor mother, some praises of her son, which he had received from his Commanding Officer. Her ears had been enchanted by praises of his gallantry, his zeal, his steadiness, and prophecies of his advancement.

"And are you invited, dearest mother?" asked George.

"Oh no! I never dine out."

"But they might have asked you!" he said.

"They might if they knew all," she replied, suddenly looking at her son, with a face in which there was an expression which surprised him.

"Mother!" cried her son, "speak, what is that all? Do not deceive me. Tell me anything that can take from my heart its deep sense of undeserved degradation—tell me, and I will bless you."

"No, no, I have nothing to tell," said the mother, bursting into tears; and she left the room.

George was much inclined not to go, but he felt he must not slight Mr. Luxmore, whose kindness had been so great and so consistent. He knew Mrs. Luxmore of yore; he knew her vain and worldly, though he did not know her cruel and heartless. Poor Eva Morris he loved as an elder sister, and well might he so

love her, since they were both the children of Disappointment and Dependence, and reared by the harsh step-dame Adversity. Angelina's coquetry, at their first meeting, had deeply wounded poor George, and he vowed that however lovely she might look, however gentle and winning she might appear, he would see in her nothing but a cold coquette, who would trifle with the deepest feelings of one who had known and loved her from her cradle.

Angelina had been much disappointed by George Darnly's abrupt departure, and had even condescended to traverse all their favorite haunts in search of him. When she found that all her trouble was vain, and her search fruitless, she felt for the first time the pique of slighted beauty, and resolved to visit on him at the very first opportunity all the mortification she now felt.

Though not regularly introduced as yet, she appeared at the dinner table when her parents had company.

On this day there was a select party at Luxmore Park—a few fashionables, ladies, friends, or rather acquaintances of Mrs. Luxmore—a young nobleman, the Earl of Featherhead—our old friend, now General Dunkeld—and Mrs. Luxmore's former admirer, Fitzgeorge, become a Colonel now, not from any great merit in himself, but from the deaths of many distinguished officers in his regiment.

Seventeen years had passed since Fitzgeorge, then the Adonis of his day, had divided his attentions between the admiring Robina, and her companion, poor Eva Morris. And this was the first time they had met since that gay season when Robina was a bride. Colonel Fitzgeorge was still strikingly handsome—to a coarse taste, perhaps handsomer than at five-and-twenty ; but he was now slightly bald, and growing stout, and the poetry of his beauty was gone for ever. Nor was the change confined to his person ; Interest had begun to usurp a little of the place of Vanity in his

heart. He began to think he had lost too much time. He wished now, rather to win one (who was in his calculation worth the winning) than to fascinate all. The tastes of the *bon-vivant* were beginning to interfere a little with those of the flirt. Alas! alas! he was no longer among the first to enter the drawing-room, but among the last to linger in the dining-room! His eyes were perhaps as fine as ever, but the increased fulness of his face made them seem less large, and their expression was more bold and less beguiling. A well bronzed military complexion, with a ruddy tint upon his cheek, had supplanted the almost effeminate delicacy of his hue. Large and very handsome black whiskers and moustachios, now surrounded his face and covered his lip; his very thick black curly hair had worn away at the temples, and a little on the crown, but was still glossy and abundant. He was a fine, martial, handsome-looking fellow, was Colonel Fitzgeorge! The many, particularly widows on the look out,

thought him much improved, but to the few he seemed how changed !

And Robina was changed too—very lovely still, but, of that Scotch Hebe beauty which is not the most lasting, the nymph-like charm of her girlhood was gone ! She was rather stout now, and consequently she looked her age, though none could dispute that for that age, she was a very lovely woman. Eva Morris was very little altered. Time had dealt most gently with those classic features and that moonlight complexion—those deep, downcast eyes. She was little changed indeed, and therefore as far as she was concerned, she might have re-inspired in Colonel Fitzgeorge the interest she had awakened in the Captain ; but no, he was changed. Dowerless beauty had no charms for him now. Seventeen years of the worship of women, and the envy of men, had made him consider himself perfectly irresistible ; but Interest had sprung up beside Vanity in his heart, and the actual object of the renewal of

his intercourse with the Luxmores, and of his inviting himself down to Luxmore Park, was to judge whether it would be worth his while to make a conquest of the young Angelina, and to make the heiress of Berkshire and the *Rose unique* of the *beau monde*, Mrs. Colonel Fitz-george!

Of his success with the young beauty he had no doubt; his only question was, whether her probable fortune was as large as his merits deserved—whether it was quite certain Luxmore would never have a son—and whether, after all, Lady Indigo, widow of a great city merchant, or Miss Mc.Braid, only daughter of a departed tailor, who had died worth half a million, would not be a better speculation.

General Dunkeld of Darkside was not improved in his opinion of human nature, in hopefulness or contentment, since we saw him last. The bushy eyebrows which he elevated in contempt of all things and people, were now white instead of black; the lank hair, parted

in the middle, and worn like a Methodist preacher's, flat down the sides of his long face, was white too ; the corners of his mouth now almost curved down to his chin ; his complexion was more sallow than ever, and the lines of discontent were become furrows now !

Mr. Luxmore, who had been tenfold a cripple since his fatal connexion with Dr. Brutus Grinlay, was apparently so feeble, and in such delicate health, that it seemed a marvel he was able to go about and take his part in the active drama of life. A short, dry cough, and a bright red spot on his thin, pale cheek, often made Eva tremble, and his daughter weep, and induced him sometimes to plan a visit to Italy ; which, but for Robina's wish to introduce her daughter in London next season, he would have accomplished.

Angelina was dressed to the greatest possible advantage, and was flirting with Lord Featherhead, when Mr. Darnly was announced. Her sudden start and change of colour attracted the

attention of even the very unobservant, self-engrossed person beside her; and his "Mr. Darnly! Darnly! why, who is that? I never heard of him before, did I?" induced her to answer with spirit, "He is one of our oldest and dearest friends." With an instinct which did honour to her heart, she rose from the sofa on which lounged his sneering Lordship, dropping "*Eau de fleurs de Paradis*" on his handkerchief, and, extending her hand to George, bade him welcome in a manner which made Lord Featherhead eye him from head to foot, and assume a very meaning sneer. But George was firm; he was on his guard; he looked on this *accueil* as a coquettish snare; he scarcely touched Angelina's warm hand—passed on to renew his acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Luxmore and Miss Morris—and finally entered into a conversation with General Dunkeld, whose dark views of human nature, and evil forebodings of all future events, were par-

ticularly in unison with the young soldier's anxious and desponding heart.

"And when do you go into exile again?" asked the General.

"Do you mean, when do I return to India?"

"Yes; it is exile, is it not? transportation or death, nay often both—I am sure my poor girl found it so."

"I wish I had not come home," said George, almost unaware that his words reached Angelina, who was attending to every syllable, while appearing to listen to Lord Featherhead.

"Well, I believe you're right; there's very little good in coming home, if one knows one must go out again; it only unsettles one, and as for the change being beneficial to one's health, I think it very trying, and that one is sure, if one has escaped a first visit to India, to fall a victim to a second."

"That is a gloomy prophecy," said George, who, not acquainted with the speaker's cha-

acter, was a little startled at his lugubrious views.

"Why, no," said Dunkeld, "I don't think so; to be sure, badly as we are all off here, we may be worse so in another world. Some philosophers believe in, and try to disseminate a notion of the gradual perfectibility of human nature and the human state; mine's a contrary doctrine; I think, from the very beginning of his being, the human creature gets deteriorated, and his state keeps pace with him."

"Nay," said George, "it is possible you may be right as to his state here, which is of course one of probation, bitter and cruel probation, but I believe firmly the next world will atone for all borne bravely here, and I think you must share that hope."

"The Dunkelds of Darkside have no hope," groaned the General; "The pleasures of Hope" "are to them a closed book."

"But the Pleasures of Reality are all their own," lisped Lord Featherhead to Angelina, as

he saw the lugubrious General devouring with his heavy eyes, a piece of green fat in a plate of turtle soup which had been just handed to him.

The dinner seemed very tedious to Angelina, for though Lord Featherhead was by her side quite *aux petits soins*, and trying every species of flattery to delight her, and though the handsome Colonel Fitzgeorge gazed at her with a kind of bold tenderness between the courses, George's eyes never once met hers. The old General had seldom met in any young man so attentive a listener, for George found his despondent and hopeless philosophy singularly in keeping with the deep dejection of his own heart.

After dinner, as it was a fine summer evening, and the ladies were amusing themselves in the beautiful grounds, the gentlemen joined them there.

Angelina, who had that extreme love of pets of all descriptions, which is found in most ima-

ginative natures and warm hearts, had with her a favourite little perroquet, whose extreme and jealous love for his beautiful mistress, was a great source of delight to herself and of amusement to the company. She had had it many years, and though it had been too kindly reared to have acquired many accomplishments, yet its native talents were varied and great. It was an adroit thief, a clever hider, a capital fighter, and though it could speak no foreign language, yet its native noises were most expressive, vehement, and often almost stunning. It had not a particle of regard or even tolerance for any creature but Angelina. It would bite, screech, fight, and even buffet with its soft green and gold wing, any hand but hers; it would suffer no one but Angelina to take hold of it; it would eat from no other hand, perch on no other chair, than hers. Poor little Truelove, as Angelina called him, was a very model of exclusive devotion and jealous exaction. Wherever she went, he would go; whatever she did,

he would interfere in ; whatever she ate, he would share ; and when she was obliged to go out without him, he would sit silent and sulky on his perch, swaying his head backwards and forwards in a sort of monotonous despair, and repeating by the hour, his only two acquired words, " Pretty Poll, pretty Delina ! Pretty Poll, pretty Delina !" Of course it was not in woman's nature not to love a creature so entirely and so exclusively fond of herself, and Angelina's warm heart responded to this bird with a warmth almost absurd, when its object was calmly considered. She never grew impatient of its frequent calls on her attention—never even in careless childhood forgot its little wants—never chid it even when it interfered with her toilet, or disturbed the elaborate arrangement of her hair. By the aid of its beak and its claws, it would climb up any dress she wore—gently or impatiently pull her by the drapery, caress her cheek with its ebon beak, and tap her with a tongue like a little bulb of

Indian rubber, or resting one claw on her shoulder, with the other it would take hold of the long ringlets of her golden hair, and draw them to their fullest length through its black beak.

On the day of this dinner-party, Truelove was perched, as usual, on his young mistress's shoulder, and was playing with her hair. The beaux when they joined the ladies by the river's side, rivalled each other in expressions of envy of the bird's happy fate, and Angelina laughed at their absurd and fulsome compliments, and received them as an unimportant but customary tribute. George alone made no comment on the bird, but he watched it with an intense interest, and felt a sort of love for it spring up in his heart. While Mrs. Luxmore tried to lure Colonel Fitzgeorge into something of the flirtation of former times, and he yielded a little, from a sort of notion of the necessity of wooing the mother for the sake of the daughter; while Lord Featherhead, really in

love as much as a creature so frivolous could be, hovered near Angelina, and tried to tease the jealous bird ; while the gay young ladies of the party ran away in hopes of being followed, and hid up in hopes of being sought ; and while Mr. Luxmore, ill and weak, leant on the kindly offered arm of his tried and true friend Eva Morris ;—poor George listened to General Dunkeld's anathemas against the whole human race, and the bitter forebodings of his own sad heart.

At length some one of the party proposed a row on the water. The generality of the party acceded with delight, and though General Dunkeld prophesied they would all be drowned, and groaned forth his conviction that it would be a happy thing for them ; and though Colonel Fitzgeorge was come to an age to dread taking cold, and to prefer comfort to frolic, they both went—the former because he did not like to lose his listeners, the latter because he knew

that the young beauty would not like him any the better, for being too steady and sedate.

But George declined being of the party, and though he saw Angelina change colour when he declined, and read an almost earnest entreaty in her fine eyes, still he was firm. "She wants to bring me to her feet, that she may spurn me," he thought. "She has repelled me once, when my heart was full of that deep trust and yearning love it can never know again; and now I am on my guard, and all her arts are vain."

He turned his steps, to follow the windings of the river, which flowed on, smiling and clear, but deep and dangerous, like his own sad heart beneath his assumed quiet.

George was roused from his sad reverie by the distant sounds of voices and of oars, and looking through the overhanging willows near which he sate, he saw the water party coming towards him; but they seemed all talking and even disputing together, and he fancied he per-

ceived Angelina standing up in the boat, and wringing her hands in distress. Alarmed at this, he hurried to the spot where they were landing. His fears were confirmed. Angelina was weeping, the gentlemen were trying to console her, and her mother was chiding.

"George!" she cried, while the tears poured down her cheeks, and in her anxiety she unconsciously laid her hand on his arm—"George, I have lost Truelove; he is gone, he is drowned!"

"Not drowned, I hope?" said George, asking of the party; "he may have flown away, but he cannot be drowned."

"He cannot but be drowned, I think," said Lord Featherhead; "I'm no swimmer, or I'd have done my best rather than see those bright eyes drowned in tears—I would 'pon honour; but the stream was so cursed swift just where he went over—it was no go—I should have been drowned too!"

"You ought to have saved him, Colonel

Fitzgeorge," sobbed Angelina—"it was all your doing."

"Why, as your pet, I wish I could have saved him; else he merits little at my hands, seeing he has my blood upon his head." And the Colonel held out his hand, on which certainly was the severest wound he had ever received.

The fact was, that while in the boat, Fitzgeorge had persisted in extending his hand to Truelove, who, jealous of the affinity of that hand to Angelina's ringlets, suddenly seized upon it with his beak; and hanging by that beak to the Colonel's thumb, was by that tortured and vindictive beau violently flung into the water. In vain Angelina screamed—in vain the poor bird fluttered, crying aloud, "Pretty Poll! pretty Delina!" the current bore the pet rapidly away. A curve in the stream, and a row of overhanging willows, helped to disappoint Angelina's tearful gaze,

and a speck of green and gold was the last she saw of the companion of years and the fondest of faithful Trueloves. The gentlemen of the party not chusing to risk themselves, proposed putting back to see what could be done, and Angelina's tears and reproaches were mingled with Mrs. Luxmore's fears lest the dear Colonel should have lockjaw from the bite, and Lord Featherhead's frivolous excuses for not dashing in after Truelove.

Having calmly ascertained exactly where the bird went over, George quietly entered the boat, and with a few manly, vigorous strokes, he was soon far away—the party ran along the banks as long as they could see him, and then a heavy shower came on, and they rushed into the house—Angelina was forced, most unwillingly, from the river's side, by her mother's command and the Colonel's strong arm. Poor Angelina! the evening passed away, but not so her grief for poor Truelove. She could not

restrain her tears, and feeling they must appear ridiculous, she turned to the window to conceal them.

"What a fool that Darnly must be," said Lord Featherhead, "to go in search of that bird; why, if there had been a possibility of recovering it, he might have been sure I should have done it. The fellow's drowned, I've no doubt of it."

At these words, Angelina grew ghastly pale, but started up with a shriek of joy, for the words, "Pretty Poll! pretty Delina!" met her ear. George, wet, from head to foot, stood at the door; the poor bird, drenched, drooping, and with a wounded beak, flew to his mistress's bosom; and George, with a hasty apology, a good night, and a graceful bow, hastened from the spot.

"What a noble fellow that is," said Mr. Luxmore.

"What a rash fool—he's evidently half drowned," said Lord Featherhead.

"And sure of the rheumatism," said Colonel Fitzgeorge.

And what said Angelina's heart ?

CHAPTER III.

THE DEPARTURE.

Angelina longed to thank George Darnly for his generous and brave rescue of her pet, but she longed in vain, for he gave her no opportunity. He came not to her home, and he never was seen in the haunts of their childhood. A new cause of offence had arisen, but one of which Angelina was not only guiltless, but unaware. Poor Mrs. Darnly, ignorant of the world, and thinking only of her son and his feelings, had ventured, unknown to him, to step to the Hall one day, and humbly to ask Mrs. Luxmore to

allow Angelina to come down to her cottage, as she had been wont to do in former times, and spend Goerge's birth-day there. It was to be a little rustic festival, and the mother wished to prepare for her son the delight and surprise of Miss Luxmore's presence. Mrs. Luxmore not only refused, but refused in a manner particularly calculated to distress the poor mother; and wishing at once to put a stop to a dangerous intimacy and to all hope in the heart of the young outcast of society, she pretended to go in search of, and consult, her daughter, and conveyed to George's mother, as if from Angelina herself, a cold and haughty refusal. At first Mrs. Darnly meant to keep this cruel slight from her son; but hearing him planning one day (for first, true, love is ever relenting) a visit to the Hall, her maternal pride got the better of her, and she told him all.

George went no more to Mr. Luxmore's: what became of him, Angelina did not hear, nor could she discover. She fancied her father

knew something on the subject, but she was afraid to ask, and new conquests, new vanities, and new hopes began by degrees to efface his image in her heart.

The season approached—the season of the Beauty's introduction into the London world of fashion; it found Angelina rich in every charm, grace, and accomplishment—the auld Leddy and Mrs. Luxmore, full of ambitious hopes, schemes and projects—but Mr. Luxmore in a state of health so delicate, that his physicians ordered the air of Italy as quite indispensable to save him from a rapid decline.

Angelina, fondly, nay devotedly, attached to her father, passionately entreated to be allowed to accompany him, but in vain; ever unselfish, he could not bear to take her from the scene of so much expected happiness and triumph, nor could he endure to rob Mrs. Luxmore, thankless and heartless though he had proved her, of the delights she had so long looked forward to.

To make sure of Mr. Luxmore's leaving his daughter in England, (for Angelina's earnest wishes and entreaties began to move the father's heart), Mrs. Luxmore persuaded her own medical man (a flirting, flattering physician *à la mode*) to assure him that Miss Luxmore had grown so rapidly, and was, in spite of her blooming complexion, so delicate, that the enervating air of the south would endanger her health. This *ruse* succeeded. In vain Angelina pleaded—in vain poor Eva wept. Luxmore departed alone.

Eva was still too young and too lovely, for the world not to misconstrue her motives, had she accompanied him, and she felt too that if he needed her much, Angelina needed her more.

And so he went—alone, ill, dejected—to try what a change of climate would do (as if the heart did not make its own climate), and in the vain hope of shaking off the pains and miseries

and infirmities which had been entailed upon him, by his horrible and protracted sufferings when under the hands of the cruel and ignorant quack, Dr. Brutus Grinlay—sufferings endured with so much heroism, for a being so ideal as the Robina he then loved so wildly and so well—sufferings which he would have borne without a murmur, till they brought him to the grave, for a love which she was totally incapable of feeling or even understanding. He was scarcely gone, when Mrs. Luxmore began to recover from her feigned distress—feigned, to conceal her real impatience of his stay. Colonel Fitzgeorge, in whose admiration of herself she still fondly believed, was summoned to her counsels. Eva was coldly slighted and shunned.

An opera box was hired, a new equipage ordered; jewellers, milliners, and dress-makers formed the daily levee; and Angelina, a good deal comforted in heart and revived in spirit

by some letters from her father, (written to comfort and to cheer her) prepared, with peerless beauty and with boundless hopes, for her first season in London.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST SEASON.

It was the gayest of gay seasons. London had never been so full and so fascinating. Hundreds of new beauties made their *debuts*; but none were at all, or in any way, to be compared with Angelina Luxmore. The sensation she created at the first Almack's ball she embellished by her presence, was (when one considers how little enthusiastic the English are) something almost marvellous. The admiration she excited in, and the homage she received from, the first fashionables and nobles

of the day, would have turned a steadier head than hers. She was positively giddy with delight. The first week of her introduction she had several eligible offers. A young baronet with ten thousand a year, an old nobleman with twenty, an Italian Prince, a Spanish Duke, and a French Marquis, all proposed, and all were instantly refused. Mrs. Luxmore did not quite approve of such summary proceedings. She thought these offers worthy of some consideration. The young baronet and the old nobleman, she fancied ought to have had some little encouragement; but Angelina was not yet coquette enough to hold out false hopes in return for a real preference; and Colonel Fitzgeorge, whose influence with Mrs. Luxmore was very great, had his own reasons for being very ready to assist Angelina in dismissing all aspirants.

She who has been an artful coquette in her own youth, naturally becomes in her daughter's, a manœuvring match-maker. Angelina's great

success certainly raised her mamma's hopes to the highest pitch; but still she began to fear lest Colonel Fitzgeorge should prove a detrimental, and Angelina's first season pass away without her having secured a coronet.

She wished Colonel Fitzgeorge then, by the most exclusive devotion to herself, to impress on the minds of all, that he was the mother's humble admirer, not the daughter's suitor; but this she had some difficulty in effecting. Colonel Fitzgeorge was a sly, resolute, experienced fellow; if at first he had only thought of Angelina as the heiress of Luxmore Park, he was now, from the close intimacy into which he had been thrown with her, actually fond of the beautiful, endearing, and accomplished *débutante*. But this he had tact enough to conceal, till it suited his purpose to make his real sentiments known. In the meantime he assumed a great control over Mrs. Luxmore, and, through her, over her daughter, to which the former yielded she scarce knew why, except that she

was weak, and as much in love as one so vain and frivolous could be; and Fitzgeorge had tact enough to make her at times doubtful of her empire, and therefore nervously anxious to secure it. He was not the sort of man to be won by deference and devotion, but that she did not know.

All this time Eva Morris led a somewhat secluded life; the pleasures which had had little charm for her at sixteen, had at two-and-thirty no attraction at all. Much as she was still admired, even by the side of the young and brilliant Angelina, Society had little to interest her; but she had promised Mr. Luxmore to watch over Angelina to the best of her power, and so she often sate through two or three protracted balls in one evening, and confined herself to the crowded streets, or thronged promenades, when a country walk, or a saunter even in the unfrequented parts of Hyde Park or Kensington Gardens, would have been a most refreshing luxury. But though Eva

Morris did her utmost to make her society agreeable to Mrs. Luxmore, that lady felt her presence a great restraint, and longed to rid herself of it. She could not help looking upon her in the light of a censor and a spy. Before one so calm, so moderate, and so wise, she was ashamed to rush from one scene of dissipation to another—to drain the cup of pleasure with so insatiate a thirst—to be so entirely devoted to this world, before her whose hopes she knew to be centred in another. She was ashamed that her husband's best and most devoted friend should see her, so long the idol of that good and noble being, wooing the somewhat *nonchalant*, sparing, and uncertain attentions of Fitzgeorge. But so it was. It was her nature, the less he devoted himself to her, the more she lavished her attentions on him; and Eva marvelled not, for she recalled the time, when even Mr. Luxmore, by appearing for a time to withdraw his love, had made Robina covet its return.

Eva was very sincere and straight-forward; she could not disguise her real feelings and opinions; she was courageous and devoted, and she would not conceal them. She disliked and despised Fitzgeorge; she thought his influence over Mrs. Luxmore a pernicious one, his great intimacy a serious detriment to both the wife and daughter of her friend. Luxmore seemed to her, degraded by his wife's undignified deference and devotion to a man who had little but his person to recommend him, and even that was now somewhat coarse and gaudy in its beauty.

Eva, too, heard many remarks and many innuendoes about this dangerous intimacy. It was a delicate subject to discuss with Mrs. Luxmore, but she felt it was her duty, and she resolved to do it. She had no doubt that, however much Mrs. Luxmore might resent her remarks, she would listen to them; and on one occasion, having at a ball where Angelina had been even more than usually adored and admired,

overheard some bitter sarcasms on Fitzgeorge's attentions to Mrs. Luxmore, she resolved to speak out, and to induce Mrs. Luxmore to dismiss him from her train, or at any rate to withdraw her intimacy.

Poor Eva! she was not at all prepared for the result. Mrs. Luxmore had long been on the watch for an opportunity of quarrelling with her. Eva's calm and watchful eyes, her candour, and her simplicity, were very distasteful to Colonel Fitzgeorge; he had often tried to rouse Mrs. Luxmore to get rid of her; and now the poor *protégée* laid herself open to all the venom, all the revenge, and all the hate, which had long been fermenting in Mrs. Luxmore's narrow heart. Eva was startled at the passions she aroused. Mrs. Luxmore taxed her with jealousy, envy, revenge—accused her of having formerly tried to supplant her in her husband's affections, and of now seeking to eclipse her in Fitzgeorge's eyes. She told her that pity for her helpless poverty, not any

respect for her character, or regard for her person, induced her to tolerate her presence—that she was far from considering the society of one so artful and designing as at all beneficial to so young an *heiress* as her child. She hinted at many serious causes of dislike and complaint, which would have alarmed any one less thoroughly good and true than Eva; and ended by saying that, although respect for Mr. Luxmore's wishes, and consideration for the silly affections of a young enthusiastic girl, had made her tolerate Miss Morris's presence hitherto, yet she had better be on her guard, and not presume too much in future, for that any repetition of her present impertinence must end in her leaving the house.

Poor Eva! she listened rather in sorrow and amazement, than in anger; but much as she had borne and could bear for the sake of Mr. Luxmore and Angelina, some of the innuendoes of Mrs. Luxmore aroused her sense of female dignity, and though her entire devotion to this

family had prevented her making any friends elsewhere, and she was in every sense alone in the world, forlorn and helpless, she could not eat of the bread and drink of the cup of the cold, insolent, and heartless woman who had so outraged her and degraded herself, and whose natural defects of temper and character were becoming intolerable under the influence of a bold and scheming man.

As for Angelina, her heart was now so full of the vanities of the world, and her head so completely turned by the homage and adulation she received, that even she did not enter, as warmly as Eva had expected, into her wrongs. A new beauty had appeared in the scenes where Angelina was Queen, and there were some who were a little disposed to transfer the golden apple to her. Hitherto Angelina had had no rival. No matter what she wore, or what her mood—whether she appeared in velvet and diamonds, or simplicity and pearls—she was the universal magnet. Then, young

and old gazed at her with an expression varying from the gallant devotion of the old school, to the less ceremonious and respectful homage of the new. Women looked at her, some to criticise and disparage, some to envy and to hate, and some few, because it was a pleasure to gaze on anything so beautiful and so unaffected. But now one almost as great a beauty, and a greater novelty, shared the flattering and universal tributes—one, too, of a perfectly different style. In her own, nothing could have surpassed her, so perfect were her features, so exquisite her complexion, so rich and radiant her profusion of hair of the gold of Ossian ; her figure, too, was so exquisite in its slight and feminine proportions. But Lady Emmeline Manners formed in every respect a contrast to our heroine—taller, more stately, and though about the same age, of a much more developed beauty ; her cream-coloured skin, with just the softest china rose in the centre of the cheek, and lips of chiselled coral,

set off her silken bands of hair of almost a purple black, her large gazelle-like eyes of dazzling jet, and her arched black brows ; her forehead was high and intellectual, and her manners at once soft and brilliant.

She had the sense to see that finery would destroy the effect of such great and real beauty, and her dress was as classic as it was costly. A tiara of gold, or gems, on that noble brow—and a white tunic dress *à la Grecque*, of some soft crape, or Indian muslin, with a cestus to correspond with her tiara, and one antique amulet to adorn one of the loveliest of arms. This peculiar style of dress, setting off a beauty so unique and so rare, frequently made Lady Emmeline Manners rival the faultless loveliness of that genuine beauty of the highest order of English loveliness, Angelina Luxmore.

Angelina at first had looked at her with pleasure ; but then, she had no idea the belle-brunette could ever withdraw one glance from herself—she had been so much used to hear

herself pronounced the Beauty of the Day, and the Rose of the World. When she did first discover that Lady Emmeline was a rival, and a powerful one, she was herself amazed at the acute and distressing feelings which sprang up in her breast. They were her first experience of the miseries of being a beauty; and if Angelina Luxmore, in the very dawn of her loveliness, already feels that the source of tears and smiles is side by side—and that even her faultless loveliness, attended as it is by vanity and self-worship, is a fatal gift—what must be the restless misery of those who possess all her foibles without half her charms—those “with hearts as vain, and faces half as fair?” What the irritable despondency of a vain beauty on the wane? What, in short, the thousand countless and impalpable vexations of one born and bred a Beauty?

Urged by her mother, and by her own vanity, to maintain her right as Queen of Beauty, and to recover the sole dominion she

had possessed, Angelina tried to surpass herself in the elegance of her dress and the captivation of her manners ; and engrossed by this paltry ambition, she attended little (oh, ungrateful and heartless beauty !) to the real woes of poor Eva—woes entailed upon her entirely by her devotion to the Luxmores ; for on many occasions her great sweetness, her beauty, and her virtue, would have secured her a good husband and a desirable establishment, could she have spared one iota of her affection or attention from poor Luxmore and Angelina.

However, it so happened that when Eva came into Angelina's dressing-room, to tell her of her mother's behaviour and her own consequent resolve, "The Beauty" had just been reading, in a fashionable paper, an account of a fête at which both herself and Lady Emmeline had been present ; and her heart swelled, and tears of mortification rose, when she saw, if possible, a higher tribute paid to the charms of the new beauty, than to her own. Angelina

was in a fever of jealousy, anger, and scorn; a bitter sense of injustice and a thirst for vengeance filled her heart.

She had been told that the piquant sketches of scenes in high life, which made this journal popular, were furnished by a certain honourable Captain in the Guards, whom she remembered having sometimes slighted, because he was a little, mean-looking man, with a sarcastic smile, and cold keen eyes, but who had been disposed at one time almost to worship in her the Star of the *beau monde*. Angelina was planning a revenge—a revenge which in calmer moments she would have been ashamed to have contemplated, and which she would have condemned in any other, as unfeminine and undignified. This was nothing less than the bringing this Honourable Captain McQuibble to her feet, that she might have the pleasure of spurning him.

It was while meditating this, and while planning the dress in which she was to commence

that difficult task, the retaking of a heart—that Eva found her—found her flushed, pre-occupied, eager, impatient, full of self, jealousy, and vanity. She could scarcely withdraw her eyes from the mirror, before which she was trying a new style of head-dress, even to look at Eva; whose pale cheeks, and eyes red with weeping, would have told more of her feelings, than pride would allow her to convey in words.

After Eva had simply and succinctly narrated Mrs. Luxmore's cold and insulting remarks—Angelina, the while, trying the effect on her forehead, of a flower here and a gem there—she paused, expecting perhaps that the Beauty would burst into tears, and throw herself into her arms. She had mistaken Angelina's silence (the result of attention to her mirror) for sympathy, and as she had been speaking with her face buried in her hands, she had not seen the young coquette's manœuvres at the glass. She was, therefore, startled, wounded, and deeply disappointed, when Angelina said: "I beg

your pardon, dear Eva, I have not heard quite all you have been saying—I am so busy now about something of such importance; but don't fret—I know mamma means nothing—after all, what does it signify?"

"Nothing, if you can ask such a question—nothing, since you can listen unmoved to such an account of what your mother has said and done. My business here is indeed at an end, when you can receive the last adieu of the friend who has watched over you and tended you from your cradle, seated before your mirror, and thinking not of my solemn agony, but of your own heartless triumphs and ruinous beauty. Farewell, then, Angelina! When that glass reflects eyes dim with time and tears—wrinkles instead of that roseate bloom—and a few gray hairs instead of those showers of gold—then, Angelina, forsaken, slighted, and oh, how lonely, how forlorn! you will remember the one friend, who loved you not for your beauty, your wealth, or your power—you

will remember Eva's desolation in this bitter hour, and your own utter heartlessness. Farewell."

With these words Eva rose to go. Angelina sprang up, and was about to throw her arms around her, to beg her forgiveness, and to assure her of her love, when she found she had in her sudden movement snapped the string of a row of pearls, on which the effect of her head-dress mainly depended. Vanity prevailed over affection, and the Beauty, while she collected the pearls, suffered Eva to depart. By the time they were restored, her mother sent to hasten her, and to request her attendance; and after an interview with that mother and Lady Mc.Grigor, in which she heard nothing but the hollow counsels of ambition and vanity, the time was so far advanced that she was obliged to hurry to her toilet; and without her wonted visit to poor Eva's room, the Beauty hastened to the Ball.

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN MC. QUIBBLE.

When Angelina and her mother, escorted by Colonel Fitzgeorge, arrived at Lady Revel's, the dancing had commenced, and a crowd was formed round a quadrille, to which, being too late to join in that dance, our party hastened, expecting to see some lion of the day exhibiting. But the Beauty's heart beat, and her colour came and went, when she found that the Lady Emmeline was the attraction, that all eyes were fixed on her, and that she was looking, as pretty women generally do under the influence of

delight and triumph, ten times more brilliant than usual.

She was dancing with that identical Captain Mc.Quibble, whose powerful and popular pen had conquered for her more hearts than even her own gazelle-like eyes. His object was to depose the reigning beauty who had slighted him, and to enthrone one who, without half the real claims to sovereignty, would probably have sense enough to recognise his influence over her destiny, and gratitude enough to acknowledge it. And so little are people in the habit of judging for themselves, that many believed, because they had seen it in print, that Lady Emmeline was the Queen of Beauty and of every ball she illumined by her radiance.

Mc.Quibble every now and then glanced at Angelina, to see how she bore the triumph of her rival. In answer to an almost affectionate salutation from Angelina, and an eager recognition from Mrs. Luxmore, he bowed with a playful nonchalance, while he took Lady

Emmeline's hand as if she had been some being of a loftier sphere and higher nature. Angelina remembered well, when he had shown her the same tender deference, and an intense desire to humble and to punish him filled her vain breast. However, there seemed to be little chance of this, for after the dance was over, he continued by Lady Emmeline's side, amusing her with his sallies and his sarcasms, and Angelina began to fear, by the occasional glance Lady Emmeline stole at her, that some of his most irresistible jokes were at her expense. She felt excessively anxious and irritable, and began herself to mistake her jealousy of Lady Emmeline and her wounded vanity, for a deeper interest in Captain Mc.Quibble. While dancing with Lord Featherhead, she was constantly watching Captain Mc.Quibble, who was much too keen-witted and sharp-sighted not to be aware of that fact—a fact very important to him, as he was really a little in love with Miss Luxmore, and so much in love with himself,

that he could ill brook any wound to his vanity, or any slight to his person.

At length Angelina, whose dignity waned (as female dignity ever does) when vanity is at the full, in passing by the supercilious Mc. Quibble, actually dropped her bouquet so near him, that he could not, without crushing it, avoid picking it up. As he did so, his eyes met Angelina's; pride, vanity, jealousy, and a sort of excitement as to how he would act, lighted those bewitching eyes, and filled them with tears; the same feelings blanched her cheek, and made her hand tremble. Mc. Quibble marked all this; he was a coxcomb, and he was in love; he misconstrued this emotion, a thousand hopes sprang to life, all his tenderness revived the moment he fancied he was appreciated. In handing Angelina her bouquet, he ventured to grasp her hand; and she not only did not resist the liberty, but urged by that spirit of coquetry, (made up of weakness, the pride of conquest, the dislike to cause pain,

and the unreflecting delight in giving pleasure;) which is the evil genius of most beauties—slightly but certainly returned that pressure. At this very moment, she heard a deep sigh near her, and looking up, perceived, to her unspeakable surprise, George Darnly at a little distance from her, dressed in a style of simple and manly elegance, which set off his really fine person to the greatest advantage. How unlike he looked to all the fops around her! How martial was his air, how full of pride and feeling were his eyes! Angelina felt intensely miserable, for he must have seen she was flirting (nay, something more than flirting) with the little fashionable and forward dandy beside her.

She tried to meet George's eyes, but in vain; he had returned to the side of an elderly lady, whom Angelina soon discovered to be the wife of the Honourable Colonel Yorke, his commanding officer; and to complete her distress, she saw him dancing repeatedly with the Miss

Yorkes, and finally waltzing with her beautiful rival, Lady Emmeline, to whom he was introduced by Colonel Yorke, and who seemed not a little pleased with her very handsome partner. Angelina could not know what was passing in George's heart; she could not know that he wished at one moment that the whole scene around him would fade away, the lights be extinguished, the music hushed, the company gone, and that he were sitting with her, (whose very existence he now seems to forget) in the old bower at Luxmore Park; and the next instant, when he recalls the smile she gave Mc.Quibble, he wishes the world would crumble away around him, and an earthquake engulf him, his supposed rival, Angelina, and indeed the whole world, for ever. No! to Angelina he seems proud of his beautiful partner, as he whirls her through the waltz; and she takes no pains to conceal her admiration of him, leaning, rather more than was necessary, on his manly

arm, and looking up into his face, with lustrous eyes and smiling lips.

.But of all concerned, none were more completely misled than Captain Mc.Quibble; he had not seen George Darnly, nor was he aware of Angelina's acquaintance with any such person. He therefore attributed to himself, and to the reconciliation with him, all the emotion which still made Angelina's cheek pale and her lip quiver. It was in vain that she turned away, cast down her eyes, remained silent, sighed, betrayed her impatience in many ways! Had she not pressed his hand? What could her present conduct be, but too great a consciousness of her own weakness and of his power Lady Emmeline was deserted. He rapidly sketched an article to restore Angelina to sole and entire sovereignty, and which article was to be written before he went to bed, and printed in the morning. Such loveliness, such a connexion, such prospects, and such possessions—he almost questioned his own

right to be so fortunate ; but a moment's reflection convinced him he deserved it all, nay more, if more could be. He looked at his conceited little self in the first mirror, and he felt more disposed to congratulate Angelina than himself; and then his wit! "Oh, she was a fortunate woman, and he was a charming man!"

He would lose no time, he would propose the next day. How unexpectedly would all the bills he had accepted be met now! How his tailor would cringe and trust! What a turn-out he would have! What a life he would lead!

He was roused from his delightful dream, by Angelina's complaining of feeling ill, and expressing a wish to go home. He folded her shawl over her with a tenderness which did not escape George Darnly; and having persuaded the unwilling Mrs. Luxmore to attend her daughter, he handed her into the carriage, with a whispered *à demain*. Angelina, after

she was seated in the carriage, suddenly looked from the window, the light of the lamps fell on the pale features and tearful eyes of George, who, not expecting to be noticed by her, was watching the carriage that was about to bear away the only woman he had ever loved. The melancholy tenderness of his gaze affected Angelina so much, that she bowed involuntarily. He was about, in spite of all his resolutions, to dart forward and press her hand, when he saw Mc.Quibble, who had imagined her bow was meant for him, kiss his hand to her. George then checked his impulse, coldly returned her bow, and turned away. Angelina, wounded, grieved, and quite upset by the first mortifications which had as yet embittered the life of a beauty, leant back in the carriage, hid her face in her hands, and wept as woman weeps the first time she feels desolate—desolate in the Past, the Present, and the Future.

CHAPTER VI.

A NIGHT'S REFLECTIONS.

Sad and sick at heart, wearied and disgusted with herself and all the world—out of spirits, out of humour, out of conceit even with her beauty and herself—Angelina retired to her room. She did not, as usual, prolong, by protracted gazes at herself, the period of undressing. Instead of sitting listlessly before the glass, listening to her maid's flattery and that of her own vain heart, she impatiently helped, herself, to remove the ornaments she had put on with so much pride and care ; and flinging a

wrapper around her, she sate down before the fire, and while Fichu brushed her matchless tresses, Angelina fell into a profound and bitter reverie.

Alas! how many a brilliant and envied ball-room beauty might be found as thoughtful and as sad, could we follow her to that home, where, the excitement over, and the (miscalled) pleasure past, she is obliged to commune with her own heart, and be still. How few of those who make this world their all, can be satisfied with the joys it yields; how seldom are the Vain content, whatever praise or admiration they may win. What envy, jealousy, heart-burnings, unexpected rivalships, slights, mortifications, eclipses, would astonish those who knew the real history of any beauty, however popular and however admired.

At length, after it had occurred to Angelina, that this world, bright as she had thought it at first, was no Paradise—that beauty was not all-sufficient for happiness, and that man was

inconstant as the wind or as a woman—Angelina bethought her of Eva—Eva, that true and gentle friend, who had often told her that she would find the world much the arid scene she now discovered it to be, and who had so sweetly and gently whispered of higher and holier sources of joy than any she could find in her own beauty or in man's devotion—Eva, whom she had wounded and slighted, and on whose gentle bosom she now wished to pour out her penitence and her disappointment.

She rose, took her lamp, dismissed her maid, and hastened to the little room, where she had so often resorted after the balls and festivals were over, to sit on Eva's little bed, and tell her of all her conquests and all her triumphs. Angelina knocked at the door. No answer was returned—no kind "Come in." What could it mean? After knocking again, and waiting some time, Angelina opened the door—Eva was not there; the room was in perfect order. The bed had not been slept in. There was

no fire, no light, no flowers, (whatever the season, Eva always had some flowers on her table) all was cold, desolate, deserted. Angelina's heart misgave her. What could it mean? At length a note on the toilet caught her eye. It was directed to herself; with a sinking heart, Angelina read.

My dear Angelina,

I find I cannot, after what has passed, run the risk of meeting Mrs. Luxmore again. Had you shown any sympathy, or evinced any interest in, or affection for, me, I would have stayed, whatever it had cost me, for then I might still have been of some use to you; but now I have no hope of that. I see this world, its pleasures and its vanities, entirely engross you. I will not blame you; God knows whether, with the same temptations, I might not have acted the same. I think not—I think I could never have smiled in the mirror while such a friend shed such bitter tears; but I

know not—we are of such different schools, Angelina—Prosperity your nurse—Adversity mine. It were meanness and cowardice in me to stay here, now that I have lost your love and my influence. If you are ever sad, disappointed, lonely, in trouble, and I can come to you, I will. I shall contrive to watch over you from a distance ; but it will be long before you find this world pall, with your beauty, your prospects, your fascination, and, forgive me if I add, your vanity. Still the day must come. You cannot always be a radiant and triumphant beauty ; and then—— But enough of this. You are so much engrossed, you forget even poor Truelove, and but for me you would have lost him more than once. I mention this, because I know his loss would cause you many a pang ; and now I cannot minister to him. I am gone. God bless and keep you, Angelina. This is the first night, for eighteen years, that I have not pressed you to my bosom ; but I feel this more than you do, or can. For my sake

(and it is my last appeal) *think more*—think how all this must end. My own fate is uncertain; one thing alone is sure—I must give daily toil for daily bread; but I have never been an idler, and all I feel at this moment is for you, not for myself. Farewell.

EVA MORRIS.

Poor Eva! could she have seen how bitterly Angelina wept—how, kneeling beside her bed, she buried her face in the pillow and sobbed—she would have thought it already time to return; but she was gone, she had left no indication whither, and Angelina, ashamed and miserable, stole to her bed.

Alas! what comfort found she there? George! to think of him was madness. Mc.Quibble! with what mortification she recalled the positive advances she had made to that coxcomb, under the influence of vanity and jealousy. Lord Featherhead! instead of indifference, his boring attentions were inducing her to hate him. Her

father! her poor father! so little thought of, of late, where was he? Her mother! how odious to a young coquette, the arts and manœuvres of an old one. Colonel Fitzgeorge! how wearing, encroaching, and boring a detrimental had he become. And then poor Eva Morris, the friend of a life, gone! gone because she had proved so heartless, so thankless, so selfish! There was nothing to comfort her—everything, on every side, to grieve and reproach her. Even True-love, she thought of with shame, for in her thirst for praise had she not often forgotten even to feed him? Ah! who would have believed that the beautiful Angelina Luxmore—so fêted, so courted, so admired, so wealthy—steeped her pillow in such bitter tears before her weary eyes closed on that night, when her triumph over Lady Emmeline in the re-conquest of Mc.Quibble, had sent that beauty home also in bitterness and tears.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WAKING HOUR.

Angelina's waking hour was for the first time a miserable one. In the sound sleep of early youth she had forgotten all her sorrows, and gathered new strength—to suffer! She woke from a dream of George Darnly, and of kneeling at the altar as his bride—from dreams of orange flowers, and Brussels lace, smiling bridemaids, her gentle father's blessing, and George's looks of speechless tenderness—from these she woke to all the harsh realities of life. George, whom in her secret heart she loved,

with that vague, restless, almost unconscious feeling which belongs only to a passion unrevealed and unhappy—he felt that he had seen her vain and heartless encouragement of Captain Mc.Quibble, and that it had decided him to shun her. Oh, for Eva's sympathy to solace her now! But Eva was gone, not to comfort and competence, (there would have been some little solace in that thought) but to toil, discomfort, and perhaps even want! But she must arise—she must array herself in all her charms—she must keep up her character of a Beauty. In her folly of the night before, she had made an engagement to go with Mc.Quibble, her mother, and Colonel Fitzgeorge, to look at her picture, exhibited at Somerset House. Alas! how weary, how monotonous the day would be!—the levee of coxcombs—the trifling, paltry, inane conversation—the hot and crowded exhibition, where the heat, the glare, the buzz, and the variety of objects of interest unfitted the mind for the appreciation

of any—where, too, she knew she would be stared at, commented on, and followed, by strange men, and where any falling off in her wonted beauty and vivacity would be gladly remarked and pointed out by jealous women—where, too, she would not be allowed one minute's silent and quiet enjoyment of any scene which might draw her from herself and her sorrows—for on one side Lord Featherhead would be uttering affected common-places, as if they were gems of wisdom; on the other, Mc.Quibble would be perpetually aiming at an epigram, a point, or a sally, and watching and waiting for its effect—and Fitzgeorge, who professed connoisseurship in pictures, would prose about length and breadth, and handling, and toning down, and focal relief, and the *chiara oscuro*, and the old masters. Oh, how different this waking to that of those bright days at Luxmore Park, when long before Fichu called her, she was up and away, playing at hide and seek in the shrubberies with George

Darnly, or rowing on the river with him, crowned with the blue bells he had gathered for her in the dewy fields he passed through, sharing the wild strawberries he had gathered for her, and listening with such delicious anticipation to his half melancholy picture of the pleasures and the lovers that would woo her when first she dawned on the gay world.

Poor George ! but it was vain to think of him ! She knew his fastidious pride, his keen and quick perception ; she knew he had seen her more than encouraging, actually wooing, Mc.Quibble from the rival beauty of the evening ; he knew her every look, tone, and manner too well, not to have understood her conduct ; and she, alas ! she knew every shade of expression of a face that was indeed the index of his mind ; and just as she had pressed that coxcomb's hand, to win him from a rival, she had read a haughty reproach in George's dark eyes, and scorn on his beautiful and cultivated lip. Nor could she ever (even should an

opportunity occur) explain away or excuse what he had seen. She knew him well enough to fear that if, with the frankness of former days she owned to him that dread of a rival, and jealousy of his influential admiration for another, had induced her to make an advance to a man she disliked, he would only despise her the more for her envy and jealousy of Lady Emmeline, than for her supposed tenderness for Mc.Quibble.

At length as, turn which way she would, she found nothing pleasant or satisfactory to think upon, Angelina, like so many others similarly placed, resolved not to think at all.

She would dress, dance, flirt, trifle, and above all, she would eclipse Lady Emmeline. She rang for Fichu, (already she had contracted the idle and odious habit of breakfasting in bed,) and while she sipped her coffee, she drank in from the pen of Mc.Quibble an animated description of the ball of the past evening, and an eloquent and impassioned tribute

to her charms. She found herself, by that only magic wand, the pen, restored to undivided sovereignty over the hearts of men—the sole and acknowledged Queen of Beauty once again. Her vain heart was solaced by this timely tribute, her spirits were enlivened, and excitement took the place of lost peace in her breast. Her morning toilette was perfection. Fichu pronounced her *mise à ravir*, and *belle à miracle*; and satisfied that Fichu was right, our Beauty repaired to the drawing-room, to receive the homage which she knew the idlers of the day would offer at her shrine.

Angelina's false spirits forsook her a little when, on entering the drawing-room, instead of the wonted bevy of beaux, she found only Colonel Dunkeld, looking more lugubrious than ever, and picking out on the piano the notes of a funeral dirge. Angelina tripped lightly up to him unobserved, pressed her hands on his eyes, and said in a feigned voice, "Guess who I am!"

"A child of misery, and an heiress of sorrow, be you who you may," groaned Dunkeld.

"Nay, you are wrong," laughed Angelina, dancing playfully round and confronting her old friend. "I am a child of happiness, and an heiress of all this world's goods."

"Your own heart does not say so," groaned Colonel Dunkeld—"does it, girl? answer me truly, I adjure you!" and he caught both her hands, clutched them tightly, and bending his long, Quixotic, solemn face down, so as almost to touch her fair and open brow, he looked into her clear, upraised eyes, as if through them he would peer into her heart.

At any other time, Angelina would have laughed at his earnestness and sported with his solemnity; as it was, his appeal awakened a thousand painful echoes in her heart. George! her father! Eva! her mother! her unloved lovers! with their, to her, wearing attentions—her real loneliness in the midst of so much revel and riot!—all rushed upon her mind at

once, the blood forsook her cheeks, her lip quivered and grew white, she made a little effort to smile, a little struggle to release herself from Dunkeld's grasp, and then, she scarce knew how or why, she burst into a passion of tears.

"My poor child! my little one!" cried old Dunkeld, catching her to his heart, and large tears pouring down his own long face—"I knew I was right—I knew I must be right;" and there was a sort of triumph even in his distress, as he held Angelina to his breast, and patted her on the back, as nurses do a fractious babe.

There was something in this ludicrous mixture of sorrow and triumph which struck the excitable imagination of Angelina, and tickled her fancy so much, that she could not but laugh. Ever since she could speak, old Dunkeld had, whenever he had met her, tried his best to persuade her, she was a miserable and forlorn creature, and till now she had always met his

most searching glances with smiles, his lugubrious queries with jests, and his awful prophecies with playful repartees. But it was all over now; in vain she laughed; he looked upon that laugh as hysterical, said her smiles were indeed of those smiles that might as well be tears, and shaking his head, added: "My poor girl, I always knew it—it is nothing new to me—I was sure it must be so—how could it be otherwise. With your prospects, your position, your person, it must be so!"

"Must be how?" asked Angelina, who, having recovered her composure, was a little nettled at his remarks.

"How! why just as it is; we all weep bitterly, from our birth to our death, and with good cause; only some weep behind a mask, and that you have done so cleverly till now, that you almost deceived me. You are young, and you know you must grow old—beautiful, and you know that however rich in bloom and beauty at eighteen, at eighty you will be a

wrinkled old woman. You start—you prefer to die ; but it is not pleasant to die either. Cold, and dull, and bleak as is this world, the grave is more dull, more bleak ; vile as are our associates now, the worms are viler ; it is not pleasant to be screwed up in a narrow box, buried perhaps alive—many are—most are !”

“ Oh !” cried Angelina, “ that cannot be true !”

“ I believe it often is ; but what does it matter ? Even that ends in death—a few struggles, and it is over ; the poor wretch buried alive comes in a few hours to that end which awaits the most brilliant career. Well, old age or Death, there is no alternative.”

“ There is the alternative of not thinking about such distressing things.”

“ Nay, I think the latter is our only comforter ; much as I loathe the thought of all the sickening ceremony and paraphernalia of the grave, I love the thought of Death, and woo her as a bride.”

His gloomy eyes looked so excited, Angelina started; she felt some misgivings as to his sanity, while he proceeded, flinging his long gaunt arms aloft: "When shall I meet thee, oh long looked-for Death—when feel thy skeleton arms around me—when——?"

"Oh, do not say such shocking things," cried Angelina; "I shall run away if you do; tell me where you have been this morning, and what you have been doing?"

"You see this garb, this hatband, these gloves?"

"I do."

"They answer for me. I have been at a funeral; I went gladly, for one is now at rest, who knew little of rest on earth."

"And who?"

"One whom I remember almost as fair and quite as young and gay as yourself. The first time I saw your poor unhappy mother, and the first time she saw that miserable being, my unhappy friend, your father, (that ill-fated meet-

ing which led to their ill-omened marriage)—it was the bridal of that very being at whose funeral I have just assisted ; and I own, I felt greater satisfaction at the last than at the first act of that tragedy. She is gone at last.”

“Not Lady Vane ?” asked Angelina, who had often heard her mother talk of her wedding, and her sources of domestic unhappiness ; and had listened to Eva’s interesting account of the victim of love.

“Yes, even Lady Vane ; and it is a marvel she lasted so long ; she was positively fretted to death—worried to her grave by the rival affection and jealousy of two beings who loved her so, that neither could resign any share in her affection ; but whom she cherished equally. They would probably have rivalled each other in dying for grief at her loss, but that she has left a child, a daughter, and now they will dry their tears for the loss of poor Lady Vane, to vie with each other in devotion to the child ; which Lady Vane, to avoid in her last dreadful

illness any trying scenes, has consigned equally to the care of both. They will probably kill it too—a happy release if they do.”

“Is it then afflicted in any way?”

“Of course it is.”

“How?”

“How!”

“Yes, how? is it deformed? or sickly? or foolish?”

“Yes; what human creature is not; it is not more so than others—it is what the world calls beautiful, and healthy, and gifted—so it calls you. But I know better—I know, and you know, that you are both deformed, sickly, and foolish—for who is not? and being so, I wish you both a quiet exit from a world of care—and would say, in your case too, it is a happy release. Ah, here comes your poor mother—we never agree—so I will away; tell her I came principally to bring her this American paper, in which is an account of the death of her old school-mistress, Miss Mc.

Prudie that was. She will be glad to see she is out of all pain and trouble—I wish we all were. Ah, I hear laughs and jests—poor worms! laugh and jest on! every laugh and every jest brings you nearer to the happy day when you shall jest no more, but banquet your fellow worms. Would that day were come for all!”

He stalked mournfully away, leaving the paper in Angelina’s hands. She, interested, as girls generally are in all people associated with their mothers’ youth, eagerly looked out the following detail, of what, in spite of Colonel Dunkeld’s more philosophic views, we must consider the tragic end of Miss Mc.Prudie.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISS MC.PRUDIE.

The paragraph which arrested Angelina's attention, and even drew the selfish Mrs. Luxmore for a few minutes from the contemplation of her own charms and the Colonel's, ran as follows.

"A melancholy instance of the fatal effects of drinking occurred in this city lately, to an aged maiden lady of the name of Mc.Prudie; the same who, some eighteen years ago, sued our not very popular Town Clerk, S. Gillespie, Esqre., for Breach of Promise. He having left

England with the professed intention of marrying the elderly spinster, and changing his mind during the voyage, having transferred his affections to a Miss Twitch, whom she brought out with her as a sort of half-friend, half-underling—the case must be fresh in the memory of our older readers; but for the benefit of the younger ones, and as a lesson to all ladies who hope to get married, we will recal its leading features, because it convinces them that though the harder sex may blend the worship of Cupid with that of Bacchus, the softer are expected to wreath no vine leaves in the rose-wreath of love—to be content with purling streams and fragrant sighs, and to dash aside the sparkling cup of rosy wine, or gem-like mountain dew. The defendant then admitted the promise and the contract, but excused his breach of faith by the startling announcement, that in the close intimacy of the voyage, he had, to his horror, discovered that the fair bride-elect never went to bed sober; and that when arrived at Quebec,

and the day fixed for the wedding, she on the very eve of her marriage, caroused in her own room to such a degree, that in a fit of intoxication she fell into the fire, from which she was rescued by her companion, Miss Twitch ; but was, in consequence of several severe burns on her face and hands, quite unfit to present herself at the altar ; in consequence of which Miss Twitch took her place there, and became Mrs. Sawnie Gillespie, on the morning after the accident.

“ The plaintiff’s counsel, in reply, had stated that the whole was a conspiracy—That Miss Twitch, instigated by the designing and inconstant defendant, had purposely made the plaintiff tipsy, with a view to the result—that while affianced to Mr. Gillespie, the plaintiff had realized and confided to him several large sums, and other property, particularly a diamond brooch of some value, to which she was much attached, as it was a love-gift of the defendant to the plaintiff in early youth—that the plea

could not be a valid one, as Miss Twitch was quite as much addicted to the bottle as Miss Mc.Prudie herself. And if habitual intoxication were the objection in one case, it ought to hold good in the other.

“To this the defendant’s counsel had wittily retorted—that it was too true, and much to be lamented, that ladies of the present day, both young and old, were too often *elevated* and *degraded* at the same moment; but that if it was impossible to teach old dogs tricks, it was quite as much so, to cure an old dram-drinker of the habits of a life; a young one might be broken in, and he thought his client had already tried his hand in that way—that it was he, was the injured party, having placed his affections on a lady who had jilted him for the bottle—that her nights were devoted to the rosy god—that she was no ways entitled to a love gift, offered when she was a well-conducted, sober-minded, amiable woman—that any presents she had made him during their engagement were a

poor compensation for all he had sacrificed for her sake, leaving his country and his profession to settle in a foreign land with her—and that surely no person whose habitual intoxication sank her below the brute, was entitled to the redress granted only to an injured lady. The jury had, it will be remembered, found a verdict for the defendant, with costs, and the public was not much surprised, when, some few months after, Mrs. Sawmie Gillespie commenced an action for assault against her husband, he having inflicted on her several severe horse-whippings, and kept her for several days locked up on bread and water. She lost her cause when it was proved that her habitual drunkenness had induced him to use her in this cruel and unmanly manner. And being exposed on her defeat and return to him to bitter taunts, and even more severe castigation whenever she took a “drap too much o’ the barley bree,” she one day collected what she could of valuables and money—among other

things the diamond brooch which had figured in the former trial—and escaped in a fishing vessel to England, whither Gillespie did not follow her, and where she probably lives in great distress, if not in beggary.

“In the meantime, poor Miss Mc.Prudie, jilted by Love, and rejected by Hymen, devoted herself entirely to Bacchus. From a respectable, dignified, and dressy old lady, she gradually sank into a dirty, sickly old crone, afflicted with delirium tremens, and often bordering on insanity. Early in the morning she might be seen pouring the liquid poison down her throat, her withered and trembling hands being scarcely able to convey the glass to her lips. At length she fell ill; the doctor and the nurse, armed with a temporary authority, forbade all potations, and removed all spirits out of her reach. Unsustained by the horrible excitement of the bottle, her melancholy and remorse were horrible. She drank off some *Eau de Cologne* and lavender water, which was on her

toilet, and under their influence, roaming about the house, in search of something to drink, she came to a closet where several bottles were kept. She clutched one, and, half frenzied, without even ascertaining its contents, (at least so it is believed) she poured the contents partly down her throat, and partly (dropping the bottle accidentally) they fell over her face, her hands, and her person, only clothed in a night-gown. It was a bottle full of vitriol, used for household purposes.

"The agonies she suffered, both internally and externally, no pen can describe; yet in this torture she lingered nearly a week, and her shrieks disturbed the whole neighbourhood. At length she died in unspeakable anguish, and a coroner's inquest sat upon her body, which presented a most hideous and appalling spectacle.

"A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned, but many had their doubts whether one of *felo-de-se* would not have been more just."

"Poor Miss Mc.Prudie," said Mrs. Luxmore, when Angelina had ended this horrible story—"isn't it shocking, Colonel? I declare I'm quite upset."

"I never see any good in harrowing up one's feelings by such details," said the Colonel, who was a great worshipper of comfort. "All I can say is, 'she took a cup too much'"—and he laughed.

"Capital!" said Mrs. Luxmore, "you are so droll, Colonel; oh dear! poor thing! how dreadful!"

"Well, we cannot get her back," said the Colonel, "and would not if we could, I fancy; so it is nonsense to fret over her. Come, a little of her *spirit* would do us no harm; I never mourn for the dead—they're better off than we are." And he pretended to look sentimental and to sigh.

"They are indeed," said Mrs. Luxmore; "poor Miss Mc.Prudie! how well I remember that brooch of hers. How we used to quiz her

and Gillespie; and to think he never married her after all! Ah, talking of brooches reminds me, I must call at Mortimer's to-day. Angelina, you look pale—that horrid story has upset you. Come, love, let us go to the exhibition."

"Yes," said Colonel Fitzgeorge, "do let's be off, before Featherhead, or Mc.Quibble, or any of those fellows come boring one. Let's order the carriage; we shall just have time to get a little luncheon before it comes to the door. I hope that *Amiens paté* is still extant."

"Oh, yes, Colonel!" said Mrs. Luxmore; "when I saw you liked it so, I had it put by and kept sacred to you."

"Then I will forthwith pay my homage at its shrine," said the Colonel, who was become quite a cupboard lover, and whose exclusive devotion to the Luxmores, was owing almost as much to Luxmore's matchless cook, as to his peerless child. Come, we shall get such a nice little luncheon before any of those fellows come."

Fitzgeorge was now arrived at the age when man is a more solitary being ; in youth men love companionship ; but in middle age all rivals become great bores, and all younger rivals are designated as 'those fellows.'

However, just as Fitzgeorge, with all a gourmand's silent and selfish ecstasy, was handing Mrs. Luxmore down to luncheon, Angelina following unwillingly and pensive, they met Mc.Quibble and Featherhead coming up-stairs. Our party was obliged either to return to the drawing-room, or to invite the intruders to luncheon. Colonel Fitzgeorge preferred the latter, though it cost him some pangs. Still there was some hope left ; they might not care for the pâté. Some people took no luncheon. Vain hope ! they doated on a good luncheon, and were almost as fond of the pâté as himself. Added to this, Sneak, the butler, had been induced by Mrs. Luxmore's particular directions to take care of the pâté, to ascertain himself, what there was so valuable in it. Alas ! in

doing so he had abstracted some of the choicest morsels. Colonel Fitzgeorge was ready to cry; but he repressed his tears with a manly resolution to make Mrs. Luxmore drive to a celebrated purveyor of such articles, and bring home another pâté of the same description; and further, he determined to use his influence with her to induce her to lock it up—a thing she had never done in her vain and thriftless life.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EXHIBITION.

How great a change may a few months effect in our views and emotions, even where no great or solemn event arrives to alter at once our destinies and our feelings. Nothing very important had happened as yet to our Angelina. She had experienced no warning reverses, no serious losses, no sudden change, little but the every-day occurrences of life—and yet she is an altered being. The boundless trust in the Future, the intense enjoyment of the Present, the entire confidence in her own charms, and

the quenchless thirst for universal conquest and universal homage, are gone; they have not survived even this her first season.

In a quiet country life, the first freshness of the heart outlives the first bloom of the cheek. In the gay world the freshness of the heart is gone, before that of the cheek is even perfected. Yet, youthful beauty in London is like a flower in a hothouse, forced into unnatural brilliancy, premature ripeness, and premature decay. Excitement must be followed by depression—animation by languor—joy by dejection—and the reaction very soon wears away the first gloss of both the freshness and the bloom.

How wearisome now to Angelina was the very sensation she made as she entered the crowded rooms of Somerset House. How monotonous and unprofitable seemed the stare and the buzz which had so delighted and fascinated her when first she came out; for though she had always been used to admiration and attention, there was a delightful difference in

that paid to the lovely hoyden in her round straw hat, her frock and trowsers—and that lavished on the matchless and exquisitely dressed heiress, who dawned on the world of fashion, not merely as the Queen of Beauty, but as one of the best matches in London.

Poor Angelina, the object of so much admiration and so much envy, how gladly she would have exchanged this crowded, bustling scene, the hot, brassy, summer sun, lighting up the many dreams of many minds, and every gorgeous gilt frame giving back a thousand dazzling rays, and becoming a sort of sun in itself—how gladly would she have exchanged it all, to sit alone by the wild sea-shore, as Stamford had realized it to her fancy, in the very picture she gazed at, with the clear ripple breaking on the beach, so translucent that she felt as if she could dip her feet in its cool, delicious foam—alone with nature and with God—no voice save that of those distant sea-mews, and the soothing solitary music of the world of waters. Or how

delightful to wander through those dells immortalised by Collins—to sit on that fallen tree, so majestic in its ruin, with George Darnly by her side, as in days of yore—to watch that dear old horse enjoying his Sabbath, (for all Collins's pictures have a sort of Sabbath calm and holy happiness about them,) and 'to look through nature up to nature's God.'

How worrying to poor Angelina, in this frame of mind, were the *miseries* of Lord Featherhead, who was entirely taken up in looking out some half-dozen portraits, a bust, and a statue of his vain, weak self. How distracting were the flippant sarcasms and forced epigrams Captain Mc.Quibble thought it necessary to bestow, on pictures which had cost so much of time and thought, and which heartless wit so briefly condemned. And how much more intolerable still were Fitzgeorge's plagiarised and heavy criticising, the cant of his connoisseurship, the safety of which consisted in the universal condemnation of modern merit and an affected worship of

even the defects of what he called with assumed awe, "the Old Masters!"

It was in the palmy days of the modern Vandyke, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and the gem of the exhibition was that fine artist's full length portrait of Angelina Luxmore. The refined, the rare, and brilliant beauty of Angelina Luxmore, so suited to the fine taste and sparkling style of the artist, had induced him to bestow on this portrait, a care and a finish, which the immense demands upon his time and talents prevented his giving to the rest of his works. The result was perfection, and Angelina Luxmore, in her happiest moments, (evanescent as such moments always are,) was scarcely more bewitching than the Angelina Luxmore whose bloom was now to go down to posterity, and to enrapture generations yet unborn.

It was some time before our party could even get a view of a picture so peculiarly interesting to them, for a crowd of 'connoisseurs, and

amateurs—of admirers of Sir Thomas as an artist, and of Angelina as a beauty—imitative admirers of what others admired, and a good many attracted by the mere abstract love of the beautiful—thronged round this bewitching picture of the Beauty of the Age! So perfect was the likeness, that even in a morning dress, and in a different mood, and consequently with a different expression, it was recognised directly Angelina drew near, by all among the spectators who caught a view of her features; and the consciousness of the presence of the original, was betrayed by the immediate hushing of all comment and criticism on the picture.

“I must really get Lawrence to take a full-length of me,” lisped Lord Featherhead, tapping his patent leather tiny boot with a little ebony cane, in the ferrule of which two rubies ‘blushed unseen,’ while in the top a little gold scent box, filled with otto of rose, ‘wasted its sweetness on the desert air.’ “There ought to be a portrait of me in this very exhibition by

Lawrence. It's his fault, not mine—it is indeed," he said, apologetically, to Angelina. "What a capital match it would have made to yours."

"Nay, Miss Luxmore's picture must ever be like herself, *matchless* and *peerless*," sneered Captain Mc.Quibble.

"I had an interview with Lawrence about mine," prosed on Lord Featherhead without understanding and without heeding Mc.Quibble's pun; "I thought, if he'd see me, he'd be sure to take me."

"Yes, to take you off," sneered Mc.Quibble.

"What did you say, sir?" asked Featherhead, who, like most weak people, was very belligerent.

"I meant that Lawrence was the very man to hit you off; he likes a good subject. I should have thought he would have made a good thing of you."

"Ah, so I thought," answered his Lordship, easily cajoled; "I was so anxious about it, I

drove to his door several times ; he was always out or engaged ; at last I got an appointment with him—fancy at six o'clock in the morning ! the only time he was to be seen ! Actually I was there to the hour, the first time since I left Eton that I ever got up at six ; nay at five, for by six I was in a new world, that out-of-the-way, outlandish place, Russell Square. By George, I saw the sun rise. Poets make a great fuss about that, but to me he looked like the Lord Mayor, all purple and gold—vulgar sight ! then I heard cocks crowing, and red-nosed, red-elbowed milkmaids crying 'milk below ;' and the streets were full of country carts of cabbages, and I don't know what other horrid nuisances. I'd no idea London was such a dull, dirty, stupid place. I have seen it at five in the morning, but under different circumstances. *It* didn't look so deuced small and shabby."

"No," said Mc.Quibble, "on those occasions I suspect you saw double, and perhaps a few

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lights danced before your eyes to enliven the scene."

"By George, I believe you're right," said Featherhead, who not being able to take three glasses of wine without their affecting his weak head, wished to be thought a hard drinker and a two-bottle man.

"Well, as I said before, I got to Russell Square by six, and I found Lawrence up, dressed, having just done breakfast. He was very courtly and polite, and all that, but I could not bring him to the point, as to when he would begin my likeness. He looked hard at me too, as if he fancied he should make a good picture of me. Why do you think he evaded it?"

"I should say he felt sure he couldn't do you justice," sneered McQuibble.

"Well, perhaps so. At any rate he fixed no time, and just as I was re-urging it, his man came in to say the Duchess of B—— was waiting for him in his atelier. So he very politely asked

me if I would go into his gallery of unfinished pictures and amuse myself there till he came to speak to me again. Like a fool I agreed; he left me there, and I spent some time looking at the pictures. I didn't like to leave the gallery before he came back, there was something deuced grand and imposing about him, though he was only a painter. At last, what with the gloomy painter's light, the quiet, and the large glaring eyes of the lifeless yet life-like beings around me, I fell asleep; having got up at five, no wonder! I awoke in an awful passion—a deuce of a rage—hungry—I was hungrier than I'd ever been in my life. At last I wouldn't stand it any longer; I rang the bell several times without effect; at length up came the same man who had admitted me. His master was gone out! it was two in the afternoon! He had forgotten all about me; at least so the man said. I felt deucedly inclined to knock the man down, and to challenge his master; but remembering he was only a painter, I drove

back to Mivart's, and made a breakfast you'd have stared at—by George, I made an awful breakfast; if you'd seen me, you'd never have forgotten it; the waiter told me he'd never seen a gentleman drink so much champagne at breakfast before. You'd have been astounded."

"I doubt it—I am never astounded at what some men swallow."

"You would have been though; for I made an awful breakfast."

These half-witted fellows think all they do awful! marvellous! stupendous!

Angelina, wearied to death with Lord Featherhead's interminable boasts and wonders, (all connected with himself,) drew near her mother and Colonel Fitzgeorge; but she found him engaged in a long pedantic jargon, the object of which was to prove, that Lawrence could not possibly be a fine artist, because he was not an old master, that the exquisite picture before him wanted depth and breadth and tone and colouring—that the hair was not massive enough

—the face out of drawing—that the whole thing wanted touching up and toning down, and so on.

“I wish it were mine,” said the Colonel, “I would do something with it—a touch here and there, and a little focal relief would do wonders.”

“What sacrilege,” whispered Mc.Quibble to Angelina, “to quarrel with that picture; it seems to me like flinging stones at some sweet Saint enshrined in hallowed niche—a touch here and there, and from that clumsy hand; why—

“One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
That shines in every golden tress
And softly mantles o’er that face,
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how calm, their dwelling place!”

And Mc.Quibble, who had an excellent memory, once started, roamed on through whole regions of rhyme, and their beauty, which would else have delighted Angelina, was marred by the forced and affected intonation with which Mc.Quibble recited them, and the theatric and

personal manner in which he applied the most impassioned parts to herself. How little did many an envious mamma, with a tribe of tall, beardless, hopeless daughters, while they so grudged our Beauty her three devoted admirers—how little did they dream that she would rejoice to resign the attentions they so coveted—that these three unloved lovers, embittered every hour of her life, and robbed even the exhibition of half its charms.

“What do you think that is?” said Mc. Quibble, pointing to a stiff figure, full length, with a conscious stare, a glossy coat, an immaculate hat, and a pair of dazzling boots—“what do you think that is?”

“I have no idea—is it anything particular? it looks a very common-place, every-day person.”

“But it is not,” said Mc. Quibble; “it is a very rare character. It is a portrait of a gentleman—vide catalogue—it is well the original is dubbed so by the catalogue, for I am sure no

one could ever discover that that was a gentleman, unless they were told so. And now do look here—how absurd !”

Angelina was obliged to look.

“The First Child !” It was a rather clever picture of a nurse putting a new-born babe into the arms of a father, whose expression of joy certainly had more of the ridiculous than the sublime.

“The First Child,” said Mc.Quibble ; “well, that horrid fellow’s raptures prove it is indeed the *first*. And now look here : “The Execution of the Doge”—a crowd, and a scaffold, but the Doge is gone to another world, I suppose, for he is not to be seen.”

“I think that is well conceived,” said Angelina.

“Yes, and so well *executed*,” retorted Mc.Quibble, “that not a trace of him remains.”

“After all,” said Angelina, smiling at the frivolous point Mc.Quibble contrived to extract from everything—“of all intellectual amuse-

ments, none is so unsatisfactory as an exhibition crowded as this always is with both pictures and gazers. There is so much to be seen, one cannot help being in a hurry—forgetting one can come again and again. One has a constant sense of the injustice one is doing to genius, by passing hastily over what must have cost so many weary days and sleepless nights. One is perpetually haunted with a fear of missing something excellent, and one cannot help being irritated by the vulgar, soulless crowds passing sentence, as it were, on what they can neither understand nor appreciate.”

“Exactly,” whispered Captain Mc.Quibble ; “fancy a crowd made up of people with the empty vanity of Lord Featherhead—or the shallow pedantry and sham connoisseurship of Colonel Fitzgeorge.”

“Or the universal jeer and sneer of Captain Mc.Quibble.”

“Nay, nay,” said Mc.Quibble, “I may have a keen sense of the ridiculous, but of the truly

beautiful I have a keener still ; and my enjoyment of the former is as acute, as my worship of the latter is intense. You, divine Angelina—you, the incarnation of all that is beautiful, graceful, and bewitching—you cannot accuse of a heartless spirit of universal mockery, one capable of a devotion so entire, a love so boundless as mine !”

Angelina reddened and drew back, as she felt, that while making this declaration, Mc. Quibble pressed her arm to his side, grasped her hand, and looked into her eyes with an expression in his own of a wild passion, partly real, partly assumed.

“ Indeed !” she replied, “ I should have expected that Captain Mc. Quibble, before making such a declaration, would have taken the trouble to ascertain how far it would be welcome.”

“ You allude to the consent of your parents,” said the conceited coxcomb, who seemed to entertain no doubt of her own ; “ but though

they might wish for a wealthier, they could not in all other respects give you to a more unexceptionable suitor. Your own fortunes, and your own expectations, make you independent of money in the man you select. I do not think it is for the happiness of either party, that the woman should be too independent of her husband ; but in point of settlements, I should not object to the settling enough of your own fortune to secure you from the possibility of ever wanting for aught. Prudence guides the parent—Love the daughter ; but surely your parents would not thwart the wishes of an only child, in a choice on which the happiness of her life depends.”

“No, certainly,” said Angelina, who had been too much astounded by the confident coxcomb’s rapid settlement, not only of her fortune, but of the whole affair, to be able to interrupt him. “No, certainly, my parents, I believe, will not thwart or dictate to me ; but when they find that all the interest I take in

the affair, consists in the instant rejection of a suit which is so completely unauthorised by me, and the destruction of hopes so unfounded, I believe I shall never be troubled on the subject again."

So saying, the indignant beauty withdrew her arm, and turned away to follow her party, who were at that moment moving into the miniature room to look at two likenesses of Lord Featherhead.

"You cannot mean what you say, Miss Luxmore," sneered Mc.Quibble, pale with rage and venom; "you cannot be such a coquette; nay, I might more truly say, such a jilt. If you will take the trouble to recal your conduct last night, you will not be at all surprised at mine this morning. I am of those who "must be wooed, and not unsought be won," he added, in a hissing whisper, and looking with a cold derision into her eyes, which made her shudder. "You cannot mean what you say, Angelina!" he added, in an altered tone,

again taking her hand—"what coy caprice is this?"

Angelina turned away, and looking angrily up, perceived George at a little distance, gazing intently upon her. His cheeks were ghastly pale, and she fancied that tears filled his eyes. He raised his hat, and passed on.

"One word, Angelina," said Mc.Quibble—"one kind word!"

"Sir," said Angelina, "the only words I have to say to you are, Farewell for ever; if anything in my manner has led you into error, I sincerely regret it, and believe me, I am sufficiently punished in the mortification of this result."

"Not quite, Madam," said Mc.Quibble, "as I hope I may yet have the satisfaction of proving to you. Puffed up by the praises of a beauty, which yet depends for its *éclat* on the praises of others, and led astray by a vanity which induces you to court the homage of any who are disposed to worship at another shrine

—mean enough to make advances to the cold and guarded, and then to slight the warm and unsuspecting—you have yet to learn, Madam, how much your power depends upon general opinion, and how much general opinion depends upon the few. Those who made can unmake; and the time is at hand when you would gladly recal him whom you now delight to humble and reject. I have the honour to wish you good morning.”

So saying, Captain Mc.Quibble strutted away, leaving Angelina, now that evening was coming on, the only person still remaining in that room. She sank on a seat, and spite of herself, her tears gushed forth. George had evidently fancied she was flirting with the very man who had so outraged and humbled her. She thought with a vague and painful dread of his power and his venom. Oh, how she blushed for her own vain and weak encouragement of this man—an encouragement prompted by a paltry jealousy of a rival, and a

miserable anxiety about her own rank as a beauty. How self-reproach, and disgust at her own weakness, poisoned every dart he had launched at her peace—and how much more was his sanguine proposal a source of humiliation than of triumph!

And in this mood she must seek out her party, and appear cheerful and composed, and account in some rational manner for Captain Mc.Quibble's departure; and with a heart full of hopeless love, regret, mortification, and alarm, she must go through the pompous pageant of fashionable life; and dress, and smile, and talk, and flirt, and wish that the turf of the valley were lying on that poor, vain, but yet not all worldly heart, which nature had made capable of so much virtue, so much happiness, and which Education had well nigh converted from a garden of Eden into a species of *Maremma*, where all useless, poisonous things might thrive, and where vanity (a sort of moral malaria) began to wither all that was

fresh and flower-like in her feelings and her character.

The hour for closing the exhibition approached, and the few that lingered were generally artists gazing at their own productions—or men and women enamoured of their own portraits. Angelina knew that her party was still in the miniature room, and she determined to go thither; but discovering that she had lost a little garnet heart from a ring which George had given her in early childhood, and which, hidden or eclipsed by more modern and far more dazzling gems, she yet always wore—she rose and went back to the room where her own portrait was, thinking that, as she had stood so long before that picture, she had probably dropped it there.

The ring was a quaint old ring, which George in his boyhood had coaxed away from his mother, to bestow it on his beautiful playmate. It represented a small serpent in gold, with a heart in garnet, hanging from his mouth.

This ring was the first love-gift George's poor mother had received from him, who, it was said, had deceived and deserted her ; and nothing but her devoted love for George, her boundless indulgence, and the fact of its being the only trinket she possessed, could have induced her to part with it.

With a deep sense of loneliness and dejection, the Beauty passed through the large and almost deserted rooms, lately so crowded ; the evening sun shone with a red and melancholy light on the gay pictures, and the gayer frames. With downcast eyes, Angelina walked towards the spot where her picture was hung ; everything was still ; she looked up—there was only one person in the whole large room. Tall, stately, and with folded arms, he stood gazing on the fatal beauty of that face ; he hears a light step and a deep sigh—he turns suddenly round—Angelina's heart was a true prophet—it *was* George Darnly !

Angelina Luxmore alone ! in tears ! so pale

and so rejected—what could it mean? George could hide his own misery, and assume a something of indifference, of gaiety, and pride, in the presence of the triumphant and heartless coquette; but George was not proof against tears in the only eyes he had ever loved to look upon. He drew near, and held out his hand, and almost humbly the Beauty placed her own in it.

“I thought you had an escort,” said George, almost tenderly, as half unconsciously he offered his arm, and as unconsciously Angelina took it—“a favoured escort,” he said, smiling down upon her as in former days.

Angelina blushed—“No, not favoured,” she said at length.

“Not favoured; oh, Angelina!”

“Not favoured, but rejected; indeed, George, he has but now left me in great wrath, and I should at once have joined my party in the room below, but that I missed the little garnet heart from the serpent-ring you gave me so

long ago, and I came back here to see if I had dropped it."

"And here I found it, Angelina; not but what your picture is a much more likely place to lose than to find a heart."

"Oh give it to me, George."

"I thought just now never to give it to you again; I gave it to you once, and you lost it; and I said in my bitterness, the emblem you had kept was more worthy of you, and that you should never possess my heart again."

"Well, if you will not give it to me now, I must hasten away; so call with it—you know well the old house, where we have played and romped together in childhood—call with it to-morrow—I must away now."

They had been standing facing the portrait of Angelina, arm-in-arm, and quite forgetting everything in the world but themselves. Angelina turned. She started, for Colonel Fitzgeorge was close by. However, he did not seem to have heard what she said, nor to notice

that she had had the stranger's arm, which she quietly relinquished. The two gentlemen bowed, and Colonel Fitzgeorge told Angelina that her mother was in the carriage awaiting her. He expressed no surprise at Mc.Quibble's absence, nor at George's presence. Angelina thought both had escaped him, and giving George a slight bow, and an earnest look, in which he read a whole delightful volume, she took Colonel Fitzgeorge's arm, and hastened away.

CHAPTER X.

L'AMI DE LA MAISON.

L'ami de la Maison! an expressive name, and one very appropriate to Colonel Fitzgeorge, and all those idle hangers-on, known in common parlance by the vulgar but appropriate title of cupboard lovers. This *Ami de la Maison*, or "Friend to the House" and its comforts, its table, and its fire-side, is often the worst of enemies to its mistress and its master, and the worst of bores to the other members, and the servants of an establishment.

L'ami de la Maison is a character seldom

found in a household where two are indeed *one*—one in thought, will, and action—where suited to each other by age, tastes, education and pursuits, the husband is all the woman requires, of guide, protector, friend, and lover—and where the wife is all the husband seeks, as confidante, companion, solace, and adviser. In such a *ménage*, *l'ami de la maison* would be sadly *de trop*. He is generally a being suddenly “born of bitterness and cradled in convulsion;” or else he springs up, the slow and gradual growth of apathy, indifference, neglect, or dislike. In *ménages* where the husband indulges in long absences, (either on pleasure or on business)—where disparity of years or incompatibility of temper prevent an entire union—where the husband is old, callous, indifferent, ill; and the wife young, weak, vain, headstrong, and full of life and its follies—there *l'ami de la maison*, is almost sure to flourish, supposing that the smiles of fortune atone to the pair for the frowns of Hymen and of Love.

For it is a remarkable thing that among those of very small or even of moderate fortunes, *l'ami de la maison* is not often found.

L'ami de la maison does not like walking, except a little on Sunday, in the Zoological or in Kensington Gardens; so he is generally seen lolling in the chariot, britscha, or barouche, of the two fools who encourage him to make their home and their equipage his own, and who in the eyes of the world appear equally ridiculous, though from different causes—the husband from indifference or blind confidence, the wife from vanity, coquetry, or almost childish simplicity. The latter fault, (if fault it be) is however in these days of universal precocity and the power of steam, almost obsolete. “*L'ami de la maison*” is generally between thirty and fifty—handsome, (usually much taller than the husband) though when the husband is burly and overgrown, *l'ami* is sometimes slender, and what others call a small, but himself, a neat, compact figure. *L'ami de la*

maison is generally a great *bon vivant*, at once an epicure, a *gourmand*, and a *gourmet*. He is equally an authority and a referee in the case of the husband's wines, and the wife's tea and coffee—the husband's horses and the wife's dress, jewels, opera-box, and flowers. He is certainly a little opinionated, not to say conceited; but as his own comfort depends in a great measure on the excellence of all the appointments of the establishment, he takes some pains to find out the best ways of doing and getting things, and as he is generally rather a clever, resolute fellow, he succeeds à *ravir*. He is generally an adept at small talk and light accomplishments, to please *Madame*; and a showy politician and tolerable sportsman, to make him agreeable to *Monsieur*. He is, or appears to be, fond of children, even babies, whom he handles and dandles adroitly, and has a clever way of amusing and quieting.

One of this genus had gained great applause by soothing a fractious infant, who never

seemed to sleep, except when it had been some time in the arms of *l'ami de la maison*. However he lost a little of the praise and all the wonder he had excited, when being suddenly called to Madame, who was in hysterics, from some squabble with her husband, *l'ami* after seizing his salvolatile, left his medicine chest open—(the regular *ami de la maison* generally has a medicine chest)—and a jealous, prying nurse discovered bottles of “*Godfrey’s Cordial*,” “*American Soothing Syrup*,” and “*Dalby’s Carminative*,” in its secret recesses. Of course Baby’s long and deep slumbers were now accounted for—and the first time her mistress found fault, the nurse-maid revealed her discovery, and in the presence of her master told the lady and the *ami* what she called “a piece of her mind.” At which impertinence, the lady fainted, and the husband, by the advice of the *ami*, turned the nurse-maid into the street, and gave carteblanche to the friend to administer whatever he thought best to the infant,

whose screeches at that moment were driving the whole party mad.

However, this brief episode has little to do with our story, except that an anecdote of one animal of a species, may throw some light on the whole race. *L'ami de la maison* is generally a great meddler, and a great dabbler in every branch of the interesting science of domestic economy. Servants hate and fear him, for he gives much trouble, no vails, and no thanks—has a keen eye for rust and dust—is quite utopian in his ideas of cleanliness, and an optimist in cookery. Grown-up daughters and unmarried sisters hate him—he is such a hopeless detrimental! And in order not to subject Madame too much to the comments of scandal, he is in public so attentive to her sisters or daughters, (as the case may be) that they feel quite sure he keeps off many good matches; and they would resent it and complain if they dared, only that his influence is much greater than

theirs, and perhaps it would end in their being taken to no more parties, balls, or operas.

These idle and questionable *amis* are much more often morally correct than the world believes. The constancy of their attentions (and it is very seldom they move off,) when once fairly established, is a strong evidence that their attachment (if attachment it can be called) is innocent, since it is well known that all guilty *liaisons* are of brief duration.

During Mr. Luxmore's stay, Colonel Fitz-george had only been able to establish himself, *l'ami de la maison*, by fits and starts, during poor Luxmore's long illnesses and occasional sojourns by the sea-side; but since his abode in Italy, he had been quite installed in that character; and since Eva Morris's departure he had openly assumed all its privileges.

To Angelina he was excessively disagreeable, both in his character and himself; an instinct tact, and an innate delicacy of feeling, and sense of the fitness of things, made her dislike

to see any one assume in the establishment the functions of its absent master. She was deeply and devotedly attached to her poor father, and therefore she hated to see the stout figure of Colonel Fitzgeorge, with his rubicund complexion and self-satisfied look, in the arm-chair, on the sofa, or in the carriage, where she had been used to see her poor crippled father, with his pale wasted cheek and dejected looks. Then, too, upheld by her mother, who was as obsequious and attentive to Colonel Fitzgeorge as she had been often insolent and indifferent to Mr. Luxmore, he assumed a sort of authority over herself—had unbounded influence as to who should be encouraged and invited, who rejected and shunned—dictated what invitations were to be given and accepted, what people courted, patronized, or shunned—what excursions planned and what arrangements made. Angelina struggled against this, but in vain. Mrs. Luxmore, weak, irresolute, and persuadable enough in most things, was obstinate

and even violent in all that concerned the Colonel's intimacy and influence; for in that she was upheld and instigated by a will stronger than her own, namely, that of the selfish and resolute Colonel. It was under his influence she had done so rudely and harshly what for so many years she had wished, yet dreaded, to achieve, even in gentleness and assumed kindness—the removal of Eva Morris. She knew full well, though she kept such knowledge from Angelina, (as likely to affect her deeply and make her give up all gaiety and amusement)—that Mr. Luxmore, in his lonely banishment, suffered much, grew weaker and weaker, and that there seemed little probability of his ever returning to assume the supremacy in his own household, to reinstate Eva Morris in her useful and dignified office, and to punish the bold usurper, and the mean and somewhat treacherous wife.

It was no part of Colonel Fitzgeorge's scheme that Mrs. Luxmore should look upon him in

the light of a lover ; and weak and vain as she was, she would yet, as Luxmore's wife, and at least a professing Christian, have started from such an idea. An adviser, a friend, a protector, and an admirer, Colonel Fitzgeorge wished her to believe him ; because he could then, without any great shock to her affections or her vanity, lead her to promote his union with Angelina. Or should that young lady prove (as he sometimes feared) quite impracticable and unattainable, he would then warm into a suitor for the mother's hand, should her jointure prove handsome enough to make it desirable ; but of course all this must depend on Luxmore's will ; and in the mean time, what so agreeable for the present as his actual position with Mrs. and Miss Luxmore, or so wise for the future as the keeping off all other attentions if likely to ripen into an attachment ?

In this, he was wonderfully aided by the Beauty herself. Fond of universal homage, captivated by general adulation, and proud of

her rank as the Queen of Beauty, she was yet above the meanness of buying attentions by the false coin of groundless hope. She took no pleasure in others' pain; and though the worship of mankind in general intoxicated and delighted, individual proposals pained and mortified her. Perhaps the secret of this, lay in that first dawning, unacknowledged, but devoted love—so exclusive in its nature, so ideal, and yet so real! which, unknown to herself, influenced all her feelings and all her actions, and which made it seem to her a sort of treason to poor George that any other man should think of her as his wife. Not that she had ever contemplated seriously a marriage with George—not that even to her own heart did she own that he was its monarch. Everything connected with him, was alternately dreamy and delicious, seen through a sunny mist, or dim and undefined, wrapt in doubt and darkness.

Whenever her mother urged her to encourage any particularly *bon parti* among the many she

captivated, Angelina would toss her beautiful head, and assume a playful scorn, which convinced the silly mother, and delighted grandmother, that Angelina's ambition aimed at something higher than she had yet met with, and that she would not give up that most becoming indifference, until the young bachelor Duke of the season had found out, who of all contending beauties, best deserved the coronet and the ermine.

Angelina took no trouble to undeceive them, and indeed she did sometimes think (when most piqued and nettled at George's avoidance and apparent forgetfulness) that, as all girls must either marry or become old maids, it would be better to aim at the highest, to secure precedence, (so dear to woman's heart) and to be first in rank as well as beauty; and all this she was the more willing to allow, because the young Duke of Dartmoor was more elegant, more interesting, and more amiable than the generality of the men of fashion around her—

because, though fond of the society of women, (as all refined and intellectual men are) he had as yet shown no preference for hers—and because his graceful figure, his martial carriage and bearing, and a certain half melancholy light in his large pellucid eyes, occasionally reminded her of the secret idol of her youthful fancy—poor George Darnly.

Angelina, during the drive home from the exhibition, was in unusually high spirits. If

“to be wrath with what we love
Doth work like madness in the brain”—

there is nothing so soothing, so delicious, so exhilarating to the spirits, as a reconciliation with the object of a first affection. There is such comfort, such exquisite repose, such ineffable happiness, in forgiving or in being forgiven, no matter which—no matter which the injured, which the injurer—to take back the dear one to the void, the panting, and the aching heart, or to be taken back from the chill and desolate exile; (the perhaps self-

sought banishment) to be reinstated in all the rights of affection, the entire confidence, the enchanting tenderness—ah, who that has loved and given or taken offence, (and what lovers have not offended often, quarrelled often, and forgiven much ?) who that has loved, does not remember, as the oasis of life's wilderness—the first reconciliation with the first beloved one ! We speak not now of trifling lovers' quarrels—so paltry as to have become proverbial—the petty jealousies of hearts that love a little and are loved a little in return : no, what we speak of is, the sad, heart-rending estrangement of two, who love for the first time, without vanity, without coquetry, without one jot of selfishness ; one iota of ambition ; when such have been estranged, (and there are some such left) ask them if Memory can recal anything half so enchanting as their first reconciliation.

And so it was with Angelina. She longed to be alone, to brood on all the treasures now stored in her heart. Each kind and gentle

word—each fond, confiding look of poor George's—the touch of his hand—the slight pressure, so evanescent, (yet she fancies she feels it still) of his dear arm—the bit of myrtle she had playfully taken from his button-hole, and which she has vowed to plant and tend, and which must grow, must thrive, she will so watch it!

She does not even heed the admiration, the more than usual admiration, she excites, for love and happiness have lent a lustre to her beauty, which, before so perfect, seems now transcendent. Her heart does not even flutter, when for the first time the Duke of Dartmoor availed himself of the introduction he had had at the beginning of the season, and not only talked to Mrs. Luxmore while in her chariot, leaning almost affectionately on the window-sill of the carriage, and gazing with open admiration at Angelina; but his Grace having persuaded the enchanted Mamma that the gardens were delightful, that Lady insisted on adjourn-

ing thither with Angelina and Colonel Fitzgeorge—and the Duke of Dartmoor was Angelina's cavalier on this occasion.

Most men would have been rebuffed and disheartened by the self-possession, the indifference, the occasional absence, and the fits of causeless gaiety of Angelina; but to the Duke, accustomed to the monotony of constant obsequiousness, watchful attention, cloying flattery, and wearisome homage, the *naïveté* and nonchalance of so beautiful a creature had in them something as novel as it was piquant.

Mrs. Luxmore, used as she was to the '*beau monde*,' still felt an intense deference for an actual Duke; and in her character of a Mamma, could almost have worshipped a young Duke, so wealthy, so influential, so exclusive, so elegant, so handsome, and so lovable, that not merely the ambition and interest of the mother, but every female predilection of the daughter, would be gratified in such a suitor. She was a little alarmed, and not a

little amazed, at her daughter's behaviour, so different from what she felt her own would have been at Angelina's age under similar circumstances. She grew nervous, flushed, and uneasy; but seeing that everything her daughter did and said, seemed to please his Grace—that he appeared to admire her every look, to enjoy her every remark, to approve of every sentiment, to laugh at her wit, and to acquiesce in her opinions—Mrs. Luxmore, with whom “success was virtue, and misfortune blame,” became more easy. She began to respect in her daughter, an actress more accomplished and gifted than herself, and to feel that it would be absurd in her to be displeased with what was at any rate lucky enough to please a Duke.

After taking, what seemed to Angelina a very long walk in the gardens, and what to his Grace appeared a very short one, our heroine pleaded fatigue, and proposed to return home. The Duke looked a little blank, as much so as a man of ton would allow himself to look at any

proposal of any kind; and Mrs. Luxmore exchanged a glance of silent horror with *l'ami de la maison*, for he, though a little in love with Angelina, was more so with himself; and as there were some good things in the Duke's gift, which he felt sure Angelina as Duchess of Dartmoor could and would obtain for an old friend, and as he was very doubtful whether she would ever listen to his suit on his own account, he began to contemplate the advantages of her marrying his Grace with some complacency, and therefore he too heard with dismay her confession of fatigue and her proposal to return home.

Great then was the Colonel's surprise and Mrs. Luxmore's consolation, when, instead of appearing the least offended, the Duke of Dartmoor, after one moment of blank surprise and disappointment, most amiably sympathized with the Beauty's fatigue, blamed his own selfish and inconsiderate pleasure in the society of so amiable a party, and turned to have the

honour of escorting Mrs. and Miss Luxmore to their carriage.

Angelina, thinking only of *Géorge*, of her treasured myrtle-sprig, and of the delight of being alone to plant it, and to muse, turned with alacrity ; but Mrs. Luxmore's delight and pride were so great, and her head so giddy with hopes for the future, and her aggrandizement in the present, by the unsought devotion of a bachelor Duke, that she positively tottered, stumbled, and perhaps would have fallen, but for the prompt courtesy with which the Duke offered his arm, and which, while it added to her intoxication, supported her manfully against its consequences.

"I hope," said his Grace, with that condescension, which is the most graceful offspring of real pride—"I hope you will allow me to cultivate an acquaintance so pleasantly commenced. Full as London is, one meets so few one cares to meet again, that perhaps Mrs. Luxmore will excuse me, if I venture to ask,

which, among the many parties she is of course invited to grace this evening, does she mean to honour with her presence ?”

Mrs. Luxmore, with a hand trembling with delight, took out her little pocket-book, and read to his attentive Grace, a list of high-sounding invitations for the evening. Fashionable as were some of the parties she named, they were not of that extra exclusive set to which the Duke belonged ; he had no card for any of those parties. He paused a moment, and then he said, with a smile so amiable, that it must have won any unengrossed heart—“Will you, ladies, and you, Colonel Fitzgeorge, accept my box at the opera for the first part of the evening, and then will you, Mrs. Luxmore, as I have no engagement, allow me to be your cavalier at any party or parties you mean to honour and to grace ? I feel disposed for a good galop, and a capital waltz, for both of which I bespeak Miss Luxmore’s hand. I am in such

spirits to-day, I positively must be taken to a ball!"

Mrs. Luxmore was so overwhelmed with ecstasy, she could scarcely stammer out her acquiescence. She was ready to cry. Angelina, who was wondering only what chance there was of meeting George at any of these parties, and determining to go only where he was most likely to be, appeared to take little interest in the marvellous advances of so grand a personage.

"I think that myrtle is of a rare kind," said the Duke, who hoped Angelina would hand it to him, and who longed to possess something that had been hers.

"I believe it is," answered Angelina, carefully fixing it in her waist-band—"I am going to plant it."

It was just as she reached the carriage that this happened. Fearing to be in some manner robbed of her prize, she sprang in, and returned the deep bow of the Duke with an almost cold

inclination of her beautiful head. But the Duke was used to have every flower he noticed, forced upon him, and every slight bow returned with lively interest. Angelina's manner, so different and so new, pleased and piqued him!

"We meet then at the opera," he said, handing in the delighted Mrs. Luxmore, whose acquiescence was as obsequious as her daughter's had been cold.

And so they parted. Mrs. Luxmore's whole conversation during the drive home was of his Grace—his great condescension, his rank, his fortune, his amiability, his influence, his beauty. She would have launched out about his evident admiration and possible intentions, together with her own desires and her daughter's brilliant prospects, but a look from Colonel Fitz-george warned her off such dangerous ground.

When they reached home, Angelina hastened to her room, to plant her myrtle, to wet it with tears, and dry it with kisses—to ponder and to dream—perhaps even to pray, for happy love

is ever a religious feeling. While she is thus engaged, her mother and *l'ami de la maison* hold a close conference together. He pours into her dismayed and startled ear a full account of the lovers' meeting, and their conversation, much of which he had overheard; oh, how little did they deem, poor victims! that those unguarded words had fallen on the cold ear of the selfish Fitzgeorge—that that enchanting meeting had had such a spectator.

"I heard him tell her," said the Colonel, in conclusion, "that he would only have time to spend an hour or two with her before leaving London for Portsmouth, to set sail for India. Of course, if we do not prevent this insane and most destructive meeting, they will exchange vows, promises, and pledges, and your daughter's prospects will be ruined *in toto*. The Heiress of Berkshire and the Beauty of the *beau monde* will find herself, at eighteen, engaged to a base-born, penniless, impertinent fellow; and Angelina, I perceive, has so much

of her father's absurd romance and nonsense about her, and so little of her gifted mother's tact, sense, and *savoir vivre*, that, if I mistake not, she will consider herself after this meeting engaged to that beggar, though the Duke of Dartmoor should throw himself and his coronet at her feet. It is monstrous, my fair friend, is it not? Why, her marriage with his Grace might be the making of every relation and every friend she has, beside the placing herself in a position second only to royalty. She would take her place as first among the peeresses of Britain, first among its noble matronage; fancy that, with her surpassing beauty, her grace, her wit, her genius, her youth! Why, Angelina Duchess of Dartmoor would be a world's wonder—such a creature placed on such a pedestal! upon my soul it drives me mad to think of the cards she is throwing away."

"But we will not let her act so idiotic a part," whined Mrs. Luxmore. "I only wish I

had had the same chance at her age. If I compelled myself, as a duty, to marry Luxmore, crippled, lame, deformed, and old enough to be my father, I cannot have much compunction about Angelina's being tricked out of this folly, into a Dukedom. But come with me to my own mother. She has a capital head, and will advise us what to do in this matter. I will just send word by Beckie to desire Angelina to go to bed for a few hours, that she may appear in all her lustre at the ball.

"Exactly," said Colonel Fitzgeorge; "and, as of course it will please Lady Mc.Grigor to be consulted, I strongly advocate our asking her opinion, particularly as I should be glad of any bond of union between us, anything in short that would make your mother, sweet friend, look with a more favourable eye on my intimacy in the family. Perhaps, if through my timely interference, her favourite grandchild is saved from a ruinous engagement with

a base-born beggar, and has a ducal coronet secured to her, Lady Mc.Grigor may not continue to think me so mere a detrimental as she, at present, evidently does."

"Oh, Alonzo!" said the lady, "my mother has very prudish, antiquated notions; she does not keep pace with the times. She was a beauty in days of starch and whalebone, prudery and precision. I do believe, in her time married women had no cavalier allowed them by society; *l'ami de la maison*, (dear delightful being,) was unknown: and so my mother cannot quite reconcile herself to your intimacy here, while Luxmore is away. She has a sort of regard and affection for Luxmore—to be sure he has been very kind to her.

"How could he be less? how otherwise atone in any way for the sacrifice you made in marrying him? There is nothing he could do, could in any way reward you, for your condescension in becoming at seventeen, and in the bloom of such beauty, the wife of such a poor

distorted creature. However, enough of that. whether Lady Mc.Grigor aids us or not, my plans are laid; of course you will approve them. This fellow is to call to-morrow at eleven, (of all hours!) to bring Angelina a little stupid bauble, a garnet heart, which she dropped from some old brass ring, and which he picked up. She has, I know, given orders to have him admitted and shown into the library, depending of course on your not being down, or being at breakfast. Now, I mean to send all the servants out of the way, (of course if you approve,) except Sneak. He shall be on the watch; and when this fellow, whom I will minutely describe, appears in the square, he shall intercept him before he positively knocks at the door. He shall then tell our Philander, who will be sending up his name, &c. &c., that Miss Luxmore herself gave orders that if such a person called, he, Sneak, was to say she had changed her mind, and would not trouble him about the ring, as it was not worth mending. I shall give Sneak an

idea," added Fitzgeorge, "that he is some aspiring jeweller. He, Darnly, of course, will send up some terrible message, which Sneak will not deliver ; but, when questioned, will persist that no one has called but a young man, (not a gentleman,) who desired him to tell Miss Luxmore, that on consideration, he thought the ring not worth mending, and that he had not time to wait upon her or see about it. The breach thus effected will be terrible," said the Colonel. "Pride on both sides will act as a perpetual blister, and as Pride is always stronger than Love, or Confidence, or Faith, so it will both sever our lovers, and prevent any breaking of hearts, or dimming of eyes, by weeping. Now what do you say to my scheme?"

"That it is worthy of you!" replied the enchanted Mrs. Luxmore, little dreaming that she could have said nothing more severe.

"Then, when I have fortified myself with a few glasses of Luxmore's excellent Burgundy, and when Angelina is at her toilette, we will, if

you please, repair to Lady Mc.Grigor's apartments, to enlist her on our side. I presume there is no chance of her appearing at table to-day; nor indeed, in her present mood, while I have the honour of supplying Luxmore's place there."

"No, her prejudices and pruderies are too strong! but I am much mistaken if, after to-day, she does not see you in a new light. If, through you, Angelina is a Duchess—(an event she has long both prophesied and aimed at)—I fancy I shall see you almost as great a favourite with her as with me."

"Well, I do hope so," said the Colonel, deliberately looking in the glass, and twirling his moustachios. "The men of a family may vote one something of a rival, and the servants something of a bore, but all the women should unite to pet one; they should, 'pon honour, for what helpless creatures they are without some kind soul to look after them—some one to

depend upon—to order about, to pet, to scold,
to flirt and dance with, in short, that kindest of
kind souls, *l'ami de la maison !*”

CHAPTER XI.

THE PLEASURES OF ANTICIPATION.

Buoyed up by the expectation of meeting George Darnly on the morrow, and her heart full of a vague yet delicious hope, Angelina arrayed herself for the successive amusements of the night. She had little chance of meeting George in any of the gay scenes she was to visit, and therefore she felt little solicitous about her appearance. She passively suffered her mother's very good taste to decide on her dress, which, elegant and becoming as it was, could never have given her the ineffable charm which she

owed to the deep and diffusive rapture of her heart. The old Leddy appeared at dinner, having conceived a sudden respect and liking for the Colonel, when she found him, in such an important affair, so able a promoter of her wishes; and indeed she now looked upon him as an useful, practical man, instead of a vain and ruinous detrimental. She saw, with a delight which almost surpassed Mrs. Luxmore's, the soft and lustrous light in Angelina's beautiful eyes, and the transparent mutability of her matchless complexion. It is true she was absent and odd in her manner, but cheerful and graceful withal; besides, what girl of eighteen, who had all but made a conquest of a Duke, could be quite herself? Lady Mc-Grigor would not believe that her grand-child, (however silly and romantic she might be in theory) could in reality hesitate for one moment between the Duke of Dartineor, and the low-born Darnly. She was sure, that half-suppressed sigh could never be meant for such a

beggar, nor that roseate and unbidden blush be thrown away on an outcast.

Colonel Fitzgeorge, fascinated by the bewitching softness which love for another lent to Angelina's looks and tones, (even when addressed to himself,) began a little to repent of the active interest he had taken in the Duke's cause, before he had ascertained beyond a possibility of doubt, what were his own chances—and Mrs. Luxmore, proud as she was of her daughter's prospects, and vain as she was of her charms, was not quite one

"who could hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear."

At least not the sighs that issued unconsciously from the broad chest of Colonel Fitzgeorge. She felt a little anxious, a little nervous, and a little jealous; to her taste, Fitzgeorge, with his well-matured and showy charms, surpassed any young Adonis or Narcissus of the day; and as he had so admired her in her girlhood, and bestowed so much of his company on her now,

and as she saw no great change in herself, and argued that the same number of years had passed over his head as over hers since they were all-but lovers—she, I say, saw no reason why, if fate decreed that she should be a widow with a good jointure, she should not bestow her hand and her wealth on a man after her own heart, namely, the handsome Colonel.

Fancying then that Angelina might see her favourite with her mother's partial eyes, and perceiving in the Colonel's gaze something of the tenderness with which, nineteen years ago, he had gazed on the young Robina Mc.Grigor at the Twickenham *déjeuner*—fearing alike for her daughter's prospects, her own, and the Colonel's affections—she became watchful and pettish, and hurried the party off to the opera, in the hopes that in the society of the Duke of Dartmoor, Angelina would be sufficiently engrossed, to crush any hopes the faithless Colonel might be presuming to form.

Early as they were, his Grace soon joined

them. Love, in its first and most delightful stage (that of emotion and fancy, rather than of feeling and reality), is ever more than punctual, and bordering on officious. It is when, as a great writer has said, "Custom comes with its inevitable curse"—when Doubt and Fear are no more, and silly woman, in mistaken pity, has shortened her own legitimate reign, (the season of suspense)—and the accepted lover has said all he so pined and panted to say, and heard all he so longed to hear—and ennui steals in, none know when, or how, or why—and good-breeding alone suppresses the yawn—then it is that the once impetuous and more than punctual lover becomes the laggard; all his pretty attentions are forced or forgotten, and *l'homme aux petits soins*, just when he has accustomed his idol to homage, and adulation, and rhapsody, in a wearied tone exclaims in excuse, "The fact is, I'm not a lady's man!" Dreadful confession! to her, who had ever seen him, not merely a lady's man, but a lady's

slave! And most unfortunate at this season, too, when the very devotion and intimacy which has exhausted his love, has perhaps only awakened hers. It is very common indeed for the courtship which disenchants the man, to enthral the woman—then, when she sees him spiritless, negligent, and almost bored, she soothes her angry spirit, and tries to rekindle her gratitude and her self-respect, by recalling the marvellous proofs of a mighty and a restless love, which he had given her even before she even owned that he was dear to her! Oh, if he loved her so wildly then, what must he do now? Ah! poor deceived one! he did love thee wildly then—and, restless and wretched, he took all that pains, and did all those mighty deeds, to ease his own tormented heart, and to beguile and comfort himself. Hence the sudden, unexpected visit, with so poor and paltry an excuse, or with none at all, so soon after the recent and protracted farewell—hence the officious billet, or the eager message, on the most

trifling occasion ingenuity could devise—the more than fraternal interest in the health of every creature of thy household, from the august papa with his gout or his rheumatism, down to thy pet puppy in the straw, or the chicken with the pip. Ah! hope not, fond woman, that for *thy* love, though when once won, it may be lasting as Misery, and certain as Disappointment, and strong as Death; hope not that for *thy* love he will do, what he did for the first pleasing pang of his own!

When you see a man extreme in every tender attention and endearing forethought—*making* occasions (where none present themselves) to lavish his homage—coming when not expected to come, and lingering when expected to go—pale, watchful, sensitive, and, though perhaps by nature niggard, lavish then—be sure *he* loves and loves much, and that probably he is in the first stage of that new, that selfish, and engrossing emotion. Reverse the picture! and behold the man who *is* loved; and to sum

was the nameless grace—the self-forgetful sweetness—"the quiet of a loving eye."

"She walked in Beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
Met in her aspect and her eyes."

She seemed to shed around her the "purple light of love"—and in spite of Lady Emmeline's diamond tiara and dazzling eyes, Angelina's white rose-wreath, seemed to crown her Queen of Love as of Beauty. The couch she sat upon became a throne, and the little crowd around her, looked a court of watchful men and attendant women.

The Duke of Dartmoor, under the influence of the only true wizard's spell, grew almost affectionate to Mrs. Luxmore—intimate, almost to friendship, with Colonel Fitzgeorge—and deferential in his attention to Leddy Mc.Grigor, and all her stories of her youth, her beauty, her conquests, and the "matchless devotion o' his Grace the Duke o' H——." He joined

in that nobleman's praise of the Mary Stuart cap which the auld Leddy wore, and his eulogy satisfied even herself, though as Angelina was dancing at the time, his Grace did not know whether the Leddy had on her proud old head a cap or a cabbage leaf. After he had figured at the opera and a ball with the vain and envied Mrs. Luxmore, with a familiarity bewitching in a Duke, but which in a commoner she would have considered impertinent, he begged her to take him home to supper.

A choice *petit souper* was soon served up. His Grace seemed to enjoy it to rapture, although Truelove, when he was bending down to speak to Angelina, somewhat closer than that decorous and jealous bird approved, did nip his ear till a crimson drop or two started. Still, as this little incident enabled him to show his presence of mind and his power of bearing pain, and compelled Angelina to express and to evince her sympathy, and to staunch the blood, with that small square of fine cambric flounced

with broad lace, which ladies call a pocket-handkerchief, his Grace was not on the whole very angry with Truelove.

A song or two from Angelina closed the night, or rather morning, for it was nearly four. Angelina retired immediately to her room. The auld Leddy, the Colonel, and Mrs. Luxmore, remained together some time, talking over this brilliant and now certain conquest.

And while they are deciding on her settlements, her jointure, her bridal dress, and her future jewels, as Duchess of Dartmoor, she—having first completed a fond letter to her father, (a letter, in which she alluded to having seen George, but made no mention of the Duke)—kissed again and again the myrtle sprig in its little pot, placed it by her bedside, and with a prayer and a heart full of George Darnly, fell asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRIMMER FAMILY.

Angelina awoke early, and brief as her repose had been, she arose immediately. She longed to enter at once on a day of so much promise. She summoned no attendant; she could not bear that the idle, flattering chatter of *Flets* should intrude on the holy joy of her heart; besides she needed no aid, for the simple toilet which she knew George Darnly liked best—her redundant golden hair, knotted *à la Grecque* behind, and hanging in smooth long curls in front; her white muslin *robe à la vierge*, spotless as

herself, and light as her heart; her black silk apron, with its little fanciful pockets and pretty trimming; and one little sprig of dark and glossy green (from her dear myrtle) in the folds of her snow-white dress, forming her only ornament! She knew no dress could please poor George so well, both because it was in itself classic and simple, and therefore suited to so high an order of beauty; and because so attired, he was not reminded of her fortunes or her rank in life; she was not the courted and wealthy heiress of Luxmore Park—she was his own Delina, his dear little wife of early days.

When she was drest, the entrance of Fichu, who came with a *tasse de café au lait* and Madame's best love, and fondest inquiries after her health and the (night!) she had passed—revealed that it was only eight o'clock. Only eight! and no hope of George's arrival till twelve.

Having ascertained that *Madame*, as *Fichu* said, *était endormie*, and that *Monsieur le*

Colonel n'était pas encore arrivé (—he lodged in a neighbouring street, but often came to an early *déjeuner*—a military habit—) Angelina ordered breakfast for herself in the library, alone; and while it was preparing, as the sun shone brightly, and the breeze was soft, she resolved to take a turn in the gardens of the Square—those gardens, for so many years the scene of her morning walks when in town, and which she had never once entered since her *début* in the *beau monde* as its Queen of Beauty. Those gardens! how did every trim walk, every flower bed, every section of the green and well-kept lawn, every seat and every shrub, recal the past! How tedious once (though with Eva by her side) the sameness of those walks! how wearisome the task she conned the while! how bright did Fancy paint the gay and noisy world beyond! How often would her poor father take refuge there, from the curious gaze of those who stare so deliberately at the cripple, knowing what pain that stare must be to him!

How, while his gay wife fluttered and flirted in promenade and park, would he sit, with Eva Morris and his little girl, making those dull gardens interesting by his delightful converse and endearing confidence. When, oh when would that kind, that beloved father return to bless his child? Ah! moralists may say what they will—first and true love is not a selfish feeling—it has a softening, a humanizing influence on the heart, when it is a happy love. Angelina's eyes were full of tears of filial piety, even while her bosom beat so wildly with its love for poor George. Hastily donning a bonnet and a scarf, the Beauty took the key of the Square Gardens from the hook where in childhood she had so often hoped it might not be found, and declining Sneak's officious aid, she proceeded alone to the Gardens, and alone she unlocked the gates.

What a quiet, almost country scene in the midst of this great noisy metropolis of folly and sin! and industrious Vice awake, and plotting

and worldly Thrift busy betimes, and languid Vanity dozing in darkened chambers, and Dissipation restless on a bed of down! In the midst of all this, the shutters of all the grand houses around excluding the King of Day, and sleepy housemaids toiling at the door-steps, or dividing their smiles between "the milk" and the policeman, and dust flying from open doors, and even footmen (so spruce at noon) who so piqued themselves on being 'wide awake,' so sleepy then! in the midst of all these, the dreary accompaniments of early morn in London, within the gates of those gardens was a little world of freshness and verdure and beauty. The air felt balmy and cool, as it passed through the bushes of lilac, laburnum, and pink May. It was June, but the season was a late one, and all those shrubs were in bloom; the verdure looked so bright, for the green was contrasted with the stems and twigs dark with London smoke; and groups of happy children played at hide and seek, and their shouts, and laughs,

and merry whoops, seemed the very language of mirth and merriment. A little while ago, Angelina would have envied them that thoughtless, that irresponsible delight; but not now, for in her heart there is a deeper, holier joy than childhood knows.

She sate for some time wrapt in happy thought, and then hoping she had got rid of some of the time which separated her from George, she rose to return home. As she did so, she became aware that some lady (—a lady she must be, so elegant was her figure, though her dress was very plain—) suddenly concealed her face with her parasol, and had evidently been watching her intently. It was nothing new to Angelina to be stared at; but the manner of this lady (who was partly concealed by a flowering shrub) arrested Angelina's attention and excited her curiosity. The hand that held the parasol (though in a glove) seemed familiar to her, as did the pretty little foot that peeped from beneath the plainest of pink gingham

dresses. Angelina rose, and then she saw that this lady was surrounded by a large family of children—six girls of different ages, one great and one little boy; the girls were dressed in large poke bonnets of a coarse straw, with thick green veils and curtains—cotton dresses, trousers, and large shapeless black silk capes; they had “hedger and ditcher gloves” of a sort of tan, and very thick boots. The great boy was in a jacket and trousers, and the little one in a tunic, with white worsted stockings. They were not playing and romping like the other children of the Gardens, but all were eagerly conning an uninviting book bound in calf skin; and, moving, near enough to look over the shoulder of one of the children, Angelina discovered it was the Eton Latin Grammar. As Angelina drew near, the lady, doubtless either the mamma or the governess, drew her parasol closer to her face; but a sudden movement of Angelina’s defeated the manœuvre; she caught a glimpse, but one glimpse, of that graceful

head and those pale features, and the next she was in the arms of Eva Morris.

The surprise of this rencontre scarcely disturbed the studies of the well-disciplined children, to whom poor Eva was now governess ; and Angelina took a seat by her recovered treasure—"the lost and found"—and drew from her the story of her present life.

"I could not stay under Mrs. Luxmore's roof, Angelina," said Eva gently, "particularly when I fancied (perhaps unjustly) that you had ceased to value me."

"Had you seen me, dearest, when I found you were gone, you would have done me more justice."

"Perhaps ; but at any rate I could not stay ; my next object was to get near to my child, for such I must ever think you—to be, where I could see your home, and sometimes, unnoticed, watch you. Often from these gardens I *have* seen you at your window—often from my own I have beheld you, crowned with flowers or

with jewels, gliding to the gay scenes you love so well. Where I am, I can always know you are well, and watch over you unseen; and as I am poor and proud, and cannot live on what is grudged me, while I have health and talents, to secure me what I consider independence, I thought myself fortunate in procuring, through an agent to whom I applied, a situation where, if I work hard, I am at least respected and esteemed. Indeed I am not unhappy. The lady whose children I instruct, is, it is true, too great a disciplinarian, too severe a *timeist*, exacting the utmost, but content when that utmost is effected. The necessity of passing rapidly from one occupation to another, cheats me of any time for painful recollections and melancholy forebodings; very early rising insures to all in good health, sound repose, and a great deal of exercise in the open air secures a tolerable appetite."

"But what a monotonous, uninteresting, laborious life for you, dearest Eva."

"It seemed a little so at first, but now habit has made every task comparatively easy. To the spoiled and courted beauty of eighteen," added Eva, with a half melancholy smile, "such a life must seem indeed most dreary, for to her, excitement and admiration, and new followers to subdue, and new events to interest, are necessary to happiness; but at my age, and with my views, hoping only not to offend and to escape insult, and sincerely willing to earn by daily toil my daily bread, and all this with the one dear privilege of sometimes seeing you, and always hearing of you—I am to my mind admirably suited! And now, my darling Angelina, now that I read in those tearful eyes that you love me as you ever did—now that I see, or fancy I see, less of this world and its selfish vanity in your manner and expression—now that I think that the loss of one who always thought for you, may have made you think for yourself—the heaviest grief I have is grown a lighter load. But I must go now, for

at nine precisely we have prayers, at half-past nine we are in the school-room."

"And when do you breakfast?"

"At seven precisely. This is our second appearance in these gardens this morning; for we rise at five, and walk an hour before breakfast. Angelina, now you have discovered my secret, you will know where I am to be found every morning, and when you want to see a true friend, come to me here."

"But cannot you stay a little longer?—I have so much to tell you!" said Angelina, who wished to pour into Eva's heart some of the delicious secrets of her own.

"Not now, not now, my Angelina; my time is now not mine; but any other morning before this hour. Mrs. Trimmer (my employer) is, I doubt not, on the look out for us. One minute to prepare," said Eva to the children, with a smile, as she took out a large silver watch, (no ornamental bauble, but a good, steady-going watch which Mrs. Trimmer insisted

that the governess, for the time being, should carry about with her, she having its exact counterpart herself)—“three minutes to get home—come, my dears!”

The children (from a tall girl of sixteen, down to the little boy) all rose like a regiment, put their books and slates in green baize bags, and formed into a file.”

“What miserable looking children!” said Angelina.

“Yes,” replied Eva, “they are perhaps too severely disciplined; extremes are bad, and too much may be done as well as too little; but perhaps in the result they may be happier than those who are spoilt by their parents. The world indulges none in the long run; and it may be well to be inured to hardship betimes.”

“I cannot think so,” said Angelina; “sixteen years of labour and sorrow that might be spent in childish pleasures, what can ever atone for so much needless misery? Why so cloud life’s morning? which in almost all cases may be

bright. Farewell, beloved Eva! I shall often meet you here. Oh! if ever I have a home of my own, Eva, you shall dwell with me as a dear and honoured sister."

Angelina, as she spoke, looked under the hideous poke bonnet and thick green veil of the eldest girl, in whose heavy eyes there was nothing of the sprightliness of sixteen, and whose shuffling, awkward manner showed her evidently ashamed of her coarse, puerile dress, her trowsers, and her thick boots. Angelina bowed kindly to Miss Trimmer, who, unused to any notice from any one, coloured deeply and made a curtsy *à la maitre de danse*.

"What a shame," whispered Angelina to Eva, as she walked with her to the gate, "to keep that great womanly girl like a child of ten—how miserable she looks!"

"And is, I fear," said Eva; "I grieve to add, she is my greatest trial—sly, mischievous, sulky, and passionate, and yet with strong feelings which might have been turned to good

account; Captain and Mrs. Trimmer treat her like a child of six, box her ears, shut her up, and often send her supperless to bed. I fear they will have much trouble with her some day, for she is in fortune, independent of them. She has thirty thousand pounds of her own, (has that girl), left her by her grandfather, quite uncontrolled. It is supposed she is not aware of that fact, and they wish to keep her in ignorance of it till she is old enough to be introduced; but I fancy from some expressions she once let fall, that she has found it out. I believe they enjoy the income while she is single and lives with them."

"Poor creature! I hope that will not be long!"

"I believe it will, for no gentlemen come near the house, except a few old sea-captains, friends of Captain Trimmer."

By this time the melancholy *cortège* had reached the gates. Eva repaired to her new home, and Angelina hastened to her breakfast.

To her great delight, she found that her mother was still asleep, and that the Colonel was engaged to breakfast with General Dunkeld. With as much indifference and *nonchalance* as she could assume, and arranging her veil the while to conceal her burning blushes, Angelina told Sneak to admit no one but Mr. George Darnly, and to show him into the library.

"He is an old friend of papa's, and as he comes on business, show him into the library at once, Sneak."

"Yes, Miss," said Sneak, with the brevity and humility of a well-bred butler; but Angelina had scarcely left the hall, when that same well-bred butler turned to a footman who had stood by like a statue, and muttered 'Walker,' at which both grinned.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LIBRARY.

The library in which Angelina Luxmore sate at breakfast, awaiting George Darnly, was a room after Mr. Luxmore's own heart; almost all the other rooms were more or less furnished according to the taste of Mrs. Luxmore and the fashionable upholsterers of the day; but the library, Mr. Luxmore's chosen retreat, and which the modish and heartless wife seldom visited, was built by himself, with a conservatory adjoining it, and took up some considerable part, of what had once been a little garden at the back of the house. Having no rooms

above it, it was lighted from the roof, which had the effect of throwing on all objects in the room, the soft and mellow effect called a painter's light; while ormolu, and buhl, and *papier maché*, and gold and silver papers, and many coloured carpets of velvet pile, and pier glasses without number, adorned the other parts of the house; the library owed all its charms to its books, its pictures, and to a few well chosen busts and statues in white marble, which were thrown into relief by the dark crimson velvet hangings, and the soft turkey carpet of the same hue. A few curious cabinets and wardrobes, and some inlaid tables and antique chairs and couches, revealed that Mr. Luxmore had a little of the antiquarian's tastes; and in fact there was scarcely an article in the room which had not some romantic or historical association connected with it. On that couch a Queen had rested—in that chair a Bolinbroke had mused—that inkstand had been Jean Jacques Rousseau's—and in that jar was a fragrant powder, mixed

by Lady Mary Wortley Montague herself. But a volume would scarce contain the history of all the curiosities Luxmore had collected, since he had been rich enough to indulge so expensive a taste. The library looked like a room in the picture of some Flemish artist, and Angelina, as she sate at breakfast, with the light shining on her golden hair and young happy face, formed a beautiful centre to the scene. The apartment was fragrant with a thousand refined and exquisite odours from the conservatory which opened out of it, and two or three orange and rose trees stood in the library windows.

Angelina would not send the breakfast things away, because she remembered George never refused a cup of coffee or a few strawberries from her hand. And indeed she had taken care to order everything he liked, and she had arranged and re-arranged both the table and the bouquet she had gathered for him, and she had read a whole chapter of a book she held,

(without taking in one word of its contents,) and a dozen times she had stolen to the one oval mirror in a silver frame, which had been Marie Antoinette's, and had smoothed her "soft alluring locks;" and then she had looked, for the hundredth time, at her little Geneva watch, and at the old time-piece on the mantel-shelf; and at last it was twelve, and Angelina grew fevered with expectation and impatience, and could not be still, for now every moment she expected the door to open, and George to be—where? at her feet? no, not till he was sure of her love—but by her side, her hand in his, perhaps her head on his shoulder! That had been when he was a boy, and should be again if George implored it. Where was the sin, the shame, of loving George? her mother might wish for grandeur; but even her mother, when George returned, (perhaps a general) from India, would relent; and her father, he would never oppose the real happiness of his only child. And George's birth, she was sure it could not

be low or base! Mrs. Darnly had often hinted to her that George might some day be somebody; and youth is so sanguine, and love so credulous, and Angelina believed in her own constancy and in George's, through a long engagement. She an heiress and a beauty wooed by all—he young, ardent, and so admired by women!

In these musings half an hour passed away—and then Angelina grew a little anxious, a little vexed, a little disappointed. Still George came not; then she grew very angry, very much hurt; a choking sensation came in her throat, a tight grasp seemed upon her heart, which no sigh (and she sighed often, and but for pride, would have sobbed) seemed the least to relieve; and then she reasoned with herself—something had detained him—something he could not help; how could she wrong him, dear George! and she kissed his myrtle sprig, and wiped away a few large tears, and rearranged the table and the bouquet, and caressed

Truelove, who all this time had shared her watch in silence, from a perch close by, as if he knew he must not intrude—but who now began to comb her long curls with his black beak and ebon claw, and to tap her cheek with his little dry cachoucha tongue, and to strut among the breakfast things, and nibble a bit of sugar, or a strawberry, or a cake—and then fluttered back to her bosom, and flapped his warm wings of green and gold, and cried, “Pretty Poll, Pretty Delina!”

And then Angelina got up and walked about the room, with Truelove, rapidly, and beginning again to feel all the anguish of hope deferred—and then she went into the conservatory and forced herself to pick the dead leaves off the plants—it was something to do—something that required no thought—something she could do in spite of those blinding tears, that choking sob, that faintness that was stealing over her senses.

At length, the dead leaves were all off, and

then Angelina looked again at the watch and at the time-piece. It was two o'clock, and her heart beat with a thousand tempestuous emotions. Now she would ring, and know if George had neither sent nor called.

Sneak came—he appeared to see nothing, but he saw all with one stealthy glance of his demure, cat-like eyes.

Angelina turned very pale.

“Take away the things, Sneak!” she said, and rose to go to the window. “Has any one of the name of Darnly called—a gentleman on business?”

“A person of that name did call, Miss, about a ring.”

“Why did you not show him in? I told you to—” said Angelina, panting, but not looking round.

“I told him, Miss, that you gave orders to have him shown up, and that you would see him. He said, Miss, that on consideration he didn't think the ring worth mending, and that

he had not time to walk up. I understood him, Miss, to say he couldn't trouble himself about it."

"What sort of person was it, Sneak? I think there must be some mistake."

"Oh, no, Miss, there could be no mistake—I saw him myself. I didn't take particular notice of him—I never do of those people; but I'm sure I would, Miss, if I'd known you were anxious about it. I hope, Miss, he hasn't carried off any jewellery you gave him to mend!"

"To mend! oh dear no! Then you don't remember his appearance, Sneak?"

"Why, Miss, he seemed rather tall, slender, with dark eyes and white teeth—I noticed that, because when he gave what sounded to me rather an impertinent message for one in business, he laughed—and then, not liking his ways or his words, I opened the door for him—I hope it is of no consequence, Miss?"

"Oh no, not the least."

All this time Angelina had not turned round ; and Sneak, while pretending to be solely busy with the breakfast things, watched her, and saw that while she pretended to busy herself in caressing the bird who had nestled in her bosom, her hands convulsively grasped the window curtains, and her whole frame shook.

“ Poor thing ! ” thought Sneak, “ what it is to have so much feeling ! Nothing to her ! I believe it’s as much to her as perquisites to me ! —the all in all. Well, I’m an ambitious man, and I’m a family man, and Mrs. Sneak’s a woman of spirit, and we do want a good sum to set up a fashionable family hotel—“ Sneak’s Fashionable Family Hotel ; ” but yet neither the Colonel’s palaver, nor Mrs. Luxmore’s fifty pound note, should have bribed me to do what I’ve done to-day, if it wasn’t for her good. But it is, it must be. Why now she’ll be a Duchess, and perhaps before long I shall see among the fashionable arrivals at Cheltenham—the Duke and Duchess of Dartmoor at Sneak’s

hotel! And what is love after all! Lor! Why I was in love with Mrs Sneak once! Well, the poor fellow's off, and I fancy there isn't much to choose between them now, for taking on; but a month 'll see him courting another, and I hope see her the Duchess of Dartmoor!"

So thinking, Sneak at length relieved Angelina of his (to her) torturing presence; and then she turned round, but so ghastly pale, so wretched, and such deep despair in her eyes, that she started at her own face in the mirror by her side.

"How mean! how cruel! how insulting!" she murmured; "and I, to be so easily the dupe of so heartless, so cruel a device—I will not weep for him—no, I am not so very weak, so lost, and so degraded. Let him go—let him laugh at my credulity and his own success. I would rather be so deceived, than such a deceiver—so insulted than such a —; but enough; oh that I could be calm! Oh that I could quiet this beating heart, and this

wounded spirit! Where shall I go? whom shall I trust? Oh Eva! that I could fly to your bosom now."

At this moment the door opened. Angelina started to her feet; her colour came, her heart stood still; she felt sure it was George, penitent and himself again, come to explain all. She hurried forward, and stood with lips apart and changing cheek, and Sneak ushered in—the Duke of Dartmoor!

It is lucky that some sort of presence of mind generally remains to any woman bred a Lady, even in the greatest distress and surprise; and Angelina had enough left, to enable her to enter into some sort of common-place conversation with the Duke, on the weather, the opera, and some of the curiosities around.

But Angelina's manner at his entrance had not escaped his Grace, who, young as he was, had already been the object of many pretended, and some real, preferences. The earnestness of her attitude, the tears that sparkled in her

beautiful eyes, the pallor of her cheek, and the tremor of her frame, all this did not escape the Duke. Vain as most men are, and as he certainly was, (though good taste kept him from any obtrusive display of that weakness,) he promptly decided that he was loved—loved with the first, wild, ardent passion of eighteen—and by the most beautiful and enchanting being he, who had seen all that was loveliest abroad and at home, had ever met with. He admired the dignity with which she recovered herself, and, the first surprise (as he fancied) of his unexpected visit over, the modest grace with which she entertained him; but he remarked that every now and then she became *distracted*, changed colour, and checked a sigh—and all this helped to deceive him. However, when he glided from a conversation on matters of taste, to one on sentiment and poetry, and tried a little to sound the depths of her heart, by endeavouring to elicit her opinion on an impassioned poem on the table, the subject moved

her so much, (rousing as it did all the recent memories of her heart,) that, alarmed at her change of colour and manner, he hastened to turn the subject; and deciding in his own mind, that with so young, so innocent, and so shy a creature, he must address himself first to "Mamma," and get her to pave the way, and prepare the blushing girl for her astounding triumph and bewildering happiness—he arose, affectionately shook Angelina's cold trembling hand, and departed.

And Angelina, the struggle over, and the necessity for exertion gone, stole to her own room, and murmuring—"Oh, George! may God forgive you!" she sank in a swoon upon the floor.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST DISAPPOINTMENT.

Oh ! the first disappointment is a cruel thing—the first disappointment of that first engrossing and real love which every heart has known, or has yet to know. The young mind is so unused to misery—distress is so horrible a novelty, to the sanguine, trusting, all-believing girl—and in Angelina's case a sense of mockery, of degradation, of insult, was added to the loss of what, till lost, she scarcely knew she so valued !

When consciousness returned, the poor girl

—(poor, though the heiress of Luxmore, and the Queen of Beauty!) for the village maid, sobbing on her truckle bed over Hodge's faithlessness feels not more desolate than did poor Angelina, as she recalled to herself Sneak's account of all George had said—his laugh! Oh, that he could laugh at such a time! And then she contrasted all this with his behaviour at the exhibition. It could not be to deceive her, to beguile her into giving him an opportunity of slighting and insulting her, that he was standing before her picture; oh, impossible! how could he know that she would come there, how mere a chance it was that she did so! And then he was so pale, his eyes so full of tears! Could there be any mistake? Sneak spoke as if it were not a *gentleman* he had seen—not her noble, martial, handsome, distinguished looking George Darnly! But then Sneak had of course a vulgar taste, and George had no appearance of wealth about him—no carriage—no servant! Who else could know

about the ring at all? it was (at least so Angelina thought) a secret between them. "On consideration the ring was not worth mending; he had no time to see her; he could not trouble himself about it, and then he laughed!"

As Angelina thought over all this, pride, vanity, and wounded love triumphed over the last faint effort at self-control, and she went off into a fit of violent hysterics. In this state her mother found her. All common remedies were tried in vain; and at length, in great alarm, Mrs. Luxmore sent for the family physician—the same courteous and fashionable Doctor who had prevented Angelina's accompanying her father abroad.

This Doctor was well used to sham swoons and pretended hysterics, and for such he always prescribed according to circumstances, that is, according to the circumstances of the fair maligner; but hysterics like Angelina's, the Doctor was indeed little used to, and was for a time very uncertain how to proceed. While

he was considering about it, exhausted nature sank into a kind of stupor, which he forthwith ascribed to a very simple remedy he had administered.

Now this Doctor was a great scandal-monger, and one source of his popularity among the Fair of Mayfair, was his inexhaustible supply of tittle-tattle. He tried his utmost to discover from Mrs. Luxmore the real cause of the violent emotion he had witnessed. He hinted at some unfortunate attachment; but the wily mother, who did not wish her daughter's weakness to be the talk of the *beau monde*, completely foiled him. All he could elicit was, the morning visit of his Grace the Duke of Dartmoor, "which, Doctor," added Mrs. Luxmore, with a meaning smile, "was not an event likely to send a young lady into fits."

"Certainly not," said the Doctor, "unless of delight. And you are sure, my dear Madam, that nothing else has happened to affect the young lady?"

"Oh, quite, unless that I have dismissed an old governess to whom she was much attached."

The Doctor thought a young lover had more to do with it than an old governess, but he appeared satisfied, and resolved to watch. After writing a very harmless prescription, he took his leave; and Angelina seeming tolerably quiet, Mrs. Luxmore, escorted by the Colonel, went out to dinner. However, in the course of the evening she was sent for by Ficku, who was really attached to her young mistress, and who saw what she considered unequivocal symptoms *d'une grande maladie*. And so it proved. Totally unused to disappointment, misery, and mortification, their effect on the excitable nature of poor Angelina was terrible. Mrs. Luxmore, on her return from the dinner party, really alarmed, pale and conscience-stricken, found her daughter dreadfully ill, and the fashionable physician being engaged, a more practical man was called in, who decided

that her complaint was a very severe attack of brain fever!

Every hour the poor sufferer seemed to grow worse. Mrs. Luxmore was herself half frantic; she had never been inured to the horrible anguish she now suffered, by any serious illnesses in her daughter's childhood. Health and beauty had combined to bless her darling, and even the necessary maladies of infancy had been so slight as scarcely to cause her an anxious hour. Yes, this was Angelina Luxmore's first illness, and it taught even her vain and selfish mother, how much dearer to her than rank, wealth, precedence, ambition, and all the Dukes in the peerage, and all the Colonels in the army, was the life of her only, her darling child.

At one time, when the case seemed most hopeless—and the Doctors whispered together and shook their heads—and the poor sufferer tossed about upon her bed in unspeakable agony, and flinging her arms aloft, called again and

again on George Darnly—the wretched mother felt, that to save her darling's life, she could gladly kneel to that same George Darnly, the penniless outcast, and that she could implore him to take Angelina as his wife, rather than see her die! But George! none knew whither he was gone, and his presence would have been no comfort, for Angelina had long since ceased to recognise any one.

Colonel Fitzgeorge found himself in a most uncomfortable plight; for when she was banished by the Doctors from her daughter's room, (which was whenever her emotion could not be controlled, and that was very often,) Mrs. Luxmore sought the Colonel, to vent on him all the anxiety and misery she felt. At the thought that through his machinations she should perhaps lose the only being she had ever loved, the glory, the pride, and the delight of her life, all regard, all courtesy for the Colonel departed. At that time she hated him, and she scrupled not to tell him so. To see him

sitting calmly enjoying some dainty, when perhaps through him her daughter, her fond, her beautiful, her beloved daughter was going down to the dark cold grave—this sight roused her almost to madness. With little natural tact or delicacy, under the influence of excitement, Mrs. Luxmore was sure to forget herself. And on one occasion, the Doctors having told her to prepare for the worst, she, rushing about the house, seeking help and finding none, came suddenly on the Colonel, deliberately picking an ortolan which he had himself ordered for his luncheon. Not to be disturbed at such a critical moment, Colonel Fitzgeorge pretended not to hear the mother's sobs of ineffable anguish; and the sight of the epicure, to whom she considered she owed her anguish, enjoying his ortolan, while his victim was dying, so excited her, that, to the Colonel's amazement, she poured out a torrent of reproach, invective, sarcasm, and even abuse. When she had done, the Colonel rose, bowed, smiled, and took his

leave. He came no more, for at his club he met an old friend, rich, and with a very coquettish wife; they were going on the continent—they wanted a caterer. Colonel Fitzgeorge had been much abroad, the lady liked him, and *l'ami de la maison* transferred himself forthwith from Mrs. Luxmore, in her wrath and her anguish, her tears which wearied, and her dishabille which offended him—her reproach of herself and him, her despair and her terror, bearable only where there is affection on both sides—yes, from such he transferred himself, to Lady Papillon, rouged and ringletted, full of affected frolic and mock sentiment, who had married Sir Jonquil Papillon for his money and his title, though he was a miserable old invalid, with no taste but for botany, which bored her *à la mort*. Sir Jonquil was delighted to be free to explore, in search of specimens—and Lady Papillon doated on military men and moustachios. It was soon arranged, particularly as Miss Cynthia Papillon, Sir Jonquil's

sister, a lady of fifty, with fifty thousand pounds, was to be of the party; and the Colonel resolved, that though he might set out as Lady Papillon's cavalier, he would return as Miss Papillon's husband. While Angelina Luxmore still lay between life and death, and Mrs. Luxmore had forgotten Fitzgeorge's very existence in her agony about her child, the Colonel set sail, with his new allies, in Sir Jonquil's yacht—a new proof, if any were wanting, of the instability of all ties founded only on vanity, and the rat-like propensities of *l'ami de la maison*, when Sorrow, Sickness, Death, or Poverty, make the hearth cold, the table cheerless, and the late gaily lighted hall, desolate and dreary.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRUE FRIEND.

If the harsh realities of life had driven the false Colonel from the wretched mother's side, they had recalled and restored the true, the devoted, the real friend, the real comforter—poor Eva Morris! And softened by misery, and the terror of losing her beloved child, (a terror which haunted her night and day,) Mrs. Luxmore, at the first glimpse she caught of Eva Morris by her child's bedside, had held out her arms to embrace her.

Eva silently extended her hand, and then,

unable to brook the sight of the altered face of the poor sufferer, round whose eyes dark circles were formed, whose peerless bloom was changed for a leaden hue—whose lips were parched and black, and from whose beauteous head the matchless locks had been severed—unable to bear this sight, coupled with the low monotonous moan of inward agony, Eva fell on her knees, and hid her face in the bed-clothes.

Poor Eva! for several mornings she had vainly watched for Angelina's visit to the gardens; but no thought that illness kept her away, had occurred to her mind. She fancied Miss Luxmore engrossed by the vanities, the gaieties, the follies of life, and in her heart Eva accused her of heartlessness and frivolity. The sight of the straw before her door, one day when she passed with her pupils, first aroused Eva's attention; and when, in reply to her terrified question, she heard that Miss Luxmore was not expected to live, the acuteness of her

anguish alone saved Eva from falling on the ground. What became of the Trimmers, Eva knew not for she immediately hastened upstairs—but it is supposed they formed a hasty council, and resolved to avail themselves of the opportunity of seeing Regent street, Oxford street, and the Pantheon, determining to call for Eva at the expiration of the two hours allotted for walking.

It was just as Eva had stolen to Angelina's bed-side, that Mrs. Luxmore beheld her, and extended her arms. Eva gave her hand, and the miserable Mrs. Luxmore, in the humiliation of her heart, carried it to her lips, and said: "Oh Eva! forgive all, and try to save my darling!"

The first glance at Angelina was, as we have seen, too much for poor Eva, who fell on her knees and hid her face in the coverlid; but after a short but earnest prayer, she ventured again to look into that once surpassing face.

At that moment Angelina opened her eyes;

she recognised Eva Morris, and the first rational words she had spoken for a week were : " Oh, Eva ! are you come at last ? "

At this sound, which to the mother's heart, was like an angel's voice—for Angelina spoke, though in a low, weak tone, like herself—Mrs. Luxmore started up with almost a laugh of joy, and fell in a dead swoon upon the floor. Eva could not move to her aid, for Angelina, exhausted with the effort of recognising her, had fallen asleep with her burning cheek on Eva's cool hand. However, Eva contrived to ring a bell at a little distance, and ere long Fichu and a nurse came in. Mrs. Luxmore was removed, and put to bed ; and Eva, while they removed her, had an opportunity of remarking the havoc that ten days of misery and terror had made, even in so worldly a woman as Mrs. Luxmore. Her hair, generally so sleek and so artfully made the best of, was rough and matted, and revealed many an unsuspected line of silver in its golden disorder ; her eyes were

blood-shot, and the lids red and swollen with ceaseless tears; her usually brilliant complexion was sallow, and her fine Hebe form, bowed and shrunken. Her dress, generally so carefully chosen, so fresh, so choice, and so rich, was crushed, soiled, and had not been changed for many days. She looked a miserable picture of self-abandonment and despair.

And now, Mrs. Luxmore being removed, and sleep having at length closed her lids, wearied with constant watching, Eva installed herself head nurse by the side of the suffering child of her adoption.

The Trimmer family returned to fetch her. And by the children she sent a message to the mother, intimating the impossibility of her returning at the same time, and throwing Captain and Mrs. Trimmer into a state of excessive (and to their miserable children,) terrible, commotion.

From the time that Angelina fell asleep on Eva's hand, a decided change for the better

took place in the sufferer's state; and Eva's joy passed all description when for the first time Angelina asked for a little tea. It seemed to refresh and revive her, for she gently returned the pressure of Eva's hand, and murmured, "Heaven bless you, dear Eva!"

Mrs. Luxmore's indisposition proved of a more serious nature than she had at first anticipated; but her anxiety about Angelina prevented her nursing herself properly. However, she could be of no use in the invalid's room, whose rest she constantly disturbed by her frequent visits, attended as they were by groans and lamentations about her own sufferings. Seeing this, and observing that she endangered both her daughter and herself, the medical attendant very wisely administered a succession of narcotics, which acting on a head already overcome by anxiety and want of rest, threw her into a sleep, which lasted, with only a few waking intervals, for two days and nights.

All this time Angelina was slowly but certainly improving; and it was then that the deep and beautiful affection of Eva Morris displayed itself in all its intense and self-sacrificing devotion. She forgot all her wrongs, all her own interests, all her resolutions; and until Angelina was convalescent, poor Eva Morris never once left her room, or slept for more than an hour at a time in a chair by her bedside.

All this while, the Trimmer family was in the greatest possible commotion; the messages were constant; but aware of the value of any person so true, so trustworthy, and so accomplished as Miss Morris, Mrs. Trimmer (incensed and inconvenienced as she felt) took care to be very civil, and to intimate her great anxiety for Miss Morris's return.

And Eva meant to return. She had a truly noble spirit and independent mind; she preferred her fatiguing but defined situation, as Mrs. Trimmer's governess, to her uncertain

position at Mrs. Luxmore's, where she had bitterly felt of late that she was *de trop*—that she had no positive business or occupation, and where she was treated as an equal or an underling, according to the disposition of those who visited the house; but where, since Mr. Luxmore's departure, Mrs. Luxmore, urged on by Colonel Fitzgeorge, had made her feel an odious sense of obligation and dependence.

The Duke of Dartmoor had received a real shock when he called in the evening of that day on which he had seen Angelina alone. He drove to the house with some excuse, sufficient in the lover's fancy to cloak his real object, but only rendering it more apparent to all calmer minds; and he literally turned pale when he was told that Miss Luxmore was seriously ill, and that she had two medical men in attendance.

As the Vulgar delight in exaggerating all bad news, particularly if they see their tidings excite any particular interest, so Sneak, when

honoured by the Duke himself with a rigid cross-examination, took care to make the worst, of what at that time did not seem so severe an indisposition; and the Duke of Dartmoor, who had intended to spend the evening in the company of his beautiful idol, and who experienced for the first time the fascinating influence of a real passion, could scarcely conceal his bitter disappointment, or check the trembling of his voice and the quiver of his white lip.

Mrs. Luxmore's terror about her only child, had been too real and too dreadful for her to give any thought even to a Duke; and during the whole time Angelina was in danger, his Grace continued to call or send morning and evening, but never saw any of the family, or heard any but Sneak's garbled accounts of the progress of the malady. Lady Mc.Grigor, at the first report of fever, had removed to Brighton, with Mrs. Beckie and Marmaduke (now a fat portly fellow).

As for Miranda Mc. Dougal, she had been

for some time at Mc.Dougal Castle, where the parvenue Lady Mc.Dougal, (once our humble friend Shoozie) surrounded by a dozen rosy children, and in close attendance on Sir Davie, who was a martyr to the gout, received the harmless lunatic with excessive kindness, and compelled all her children to abstain from ridiculing her willow wreaths, her sepulchral urns, her plaintive ditties, and her romantic reminiscences of the "Sainted Fitzhodgville! and his wild Amen."

The haughty elder spinsters were still extant; but as they never could stoop to sitting as guests at a table headed by such a Lady Mc.Dougal, they had requested their brother to allow them to inhabit Glenlonely, which place had been vacant since the death of Sir Grigor Mc.Grigor. Sir Davie, indignant at their behaviour to his devoted Shoozie, would have refused, but she interceded so earnestly, that he at length complied; and when the proud old maids installed themselves at Glenlonely,

they little knew or thought that their brother yielded not to their demand, but to the despised Shoozie's prayer.

Mrs. Luxmore then, on her recovery from her somewhat severe indisposition, found herself quite deserted by all whom she had obliged and favoured, and discovered with mortification and rage, that the only being who did not forsake her, was one whom she had so cruelly wronged and outraged. The Colonel! oh, no words could describe her fury at his heartless desertion; his attentions were become so necessary to her comfort, so essential to her enjoyment! She would have made any apology or concession to recal him; but he was gone for ever! And when she found Angelina so much better, as to excite no longer any horrible maternal alarm, the only subject to which Mrs. Luxmore could revert with any comfort, was the evident and continued devotion of his Grace the Duke of Dartmoor.

By degrees as the Mamma's health enabled

her to resume her attendance in her daughter's room, Eva Morris's visits grew less frequent and more brief, and the impression she was beginning to make on the softened heart and awakened conscience of the convalescent, was effaced, by the vain schemes, ambitious projects, and beguiling flatteries of the fond and fascinating mother. In the long and silent nights of mental depression and bodily pain, Angelina had thought much of her own vanity and folly. When death seemed probable, it struck the Beauty for the first time, how very unfit she was to die. The image of poor George Darnly returned to her mind, and roused, not as at first, the wrath and resentment of an offended Beauty, but the unselfish anxiety of true love. She wished (in those moments of bitter self-examination and care for her eternal destiny) to see George, not to taunt and reproach him, and revenge her imaginary wrongs; nor yet, as in happier hours, to exchange the mutual vow, the sweet confession;

no, her longing for his presence now was, that she might prove to him how fleeting and how paltry were this world's best gifts—how unreal the Future they had so often anticipated together—how a few hours of intense bodily pain, and keen mental anguish, could prostrate the Favourite of Nature and Fortune, and make her cling more to her early child-like faith in a crucified Saviour, and the faint memory of a few good deeds, than to any hopes, Science could hold out, or partial affection breathe, or to all the treasures this world still seemed to hold out to tempt her aching eyes and fevered brain. And while Eva Morris was her nurse, her convalescence was hallowed by sweet communings on holy subjects—gentle confessions of worldly errors—warm and heartfelt resolutions, and aspirations after better things—meek penitence on one side, and noble Christian counsel on the other.

Had Eva Morris alone, watched and tended Angelina through the long hours of mental

and bodily weakness which attend the recovery from such an illness, she would probably never again have enlisted herself under the gaudy banner of Mammon. But the return of Mrs. Luxmore to her daughter's sick room, soon banished that faithful friend. The mother came with her real anxiety and affection, (which spite of her many faults, her daughter warmly reciprocated) her thinly-veiled jealousy of, and enmity towards, Eva—her worldly views and counsels—her fascinating pictures of the world and its vanities—her enlivening anecdotes of the Duke of Dartmoor's devotion—the anxiety of the *beau monde* about its lovely Queen—and the evident envy of all daughters of fashion of the interest Angelina's illness had awakened, even in so callous a sphere, and the ill-concealed hope that the Beauty might appear no more, or come forth shorn of half her beams.

The Beauty's pale cheek was slightly flushed as she heard all this, and mournfully she raised her transparent hand to her head, to ascertain

the full extent of the loss she had sustained, in those radiant and redundant tresses which had been shorn by the order of the first physicians of the day. She found that enough had been left on her brow to braid under a cap, but the glory of this, one of her rarest attributes, was gone.

"How could you let them disfigure me so, Mamma?" she said, plaintively, while tears filled the beautiful eyes which looked unusually large now that her cheeks were so wan. (In Eva's time she had never once bewailed the loss of those matchless golden tresses!)

"Indeed, dearest! I hardly know; but at the thought of losing you, I was so maddened, I would have agreed to anything that offered the faintest chance of benefit; still, even then I had presence of mind sufficient to see that enough hair was left for you to look lovely as ever in a cap; and I think, my precious darling, that as the season is now well nigh over, and your health requires change of air,

we will not dream of re-appearing in the fashionable world here, but repair either to Luxmore Park, or some fashionable watering-place directly you are well enough to bear the fatigue of travelling. His Grace can easily find us out and follow us, if he is so disposed; and in the country you can wear some pretty little "*bonnet à la jolie femme*," or "*à la jardinière*," until your beautiful hair grows long enough to be dressed again. Say, darling, which shall it be—Luxmore Park, or the sea-side?"

"Not Luxmore Park!" faltered Angelina, for with Luxmore Park came the thought of George Darnly. "And Eva must go with us, Mamma!"

"Oh, certainly, if you wish it," replied Mrs. Luxmore, concealing her annoyance, and resolving so to manage that Eva, with her spirit could not go with them. But Mrs. Luxmore had no need to manœuvre or to manage. While Eva Morris sate for an hour that evening by

the sofa of the now fully convalescent Beauty, and listened with affectionate regret, to thoughts and feelings so different from those she had heard from her of late, a servant from Mrs. Trimmer's came in great haste, to request Miss Morris's instant return, as a great domestic misfortune had happened.

Eva was sufficiently interested in these odd people, and indeed in all her fellow creatures, to be startled and to turn pale; she rose in great haste and alarm.

"Fear not, Eva," said Angelina, smiling, "I dare say this great domestic calamity is nothing but the stopping of the school-room clock, or the loss of the rod."

"Perhaps," sneered Mrs. Luxmore, "some fortune-hunting, half-pay officer has eloped with the blear-eyed Miss Trimmer, for the sake of her thirty thousand pounds!"

"Oh, no, no," said Eva, "I hope not, for uncouth and stupid as she is, the poor girl has, I think, some affections, some heart; and I

should indeed grieve if she were to fall a prey to any heartless man of fashion ; but they know none such ; and, indeed, while I was attending on Angelina here, the only person Captain and Mrs. Trimmer would trust them with, was the Coachman—fat, burly, steady as Time, and cross as steady ; a Methodist too, nay more, a Methodist preacher, as harsh with the poor creatures as their own parents. This lugubrious fellow has had the sole charge of them in their walks, with strict orders to keep close to the side of poor Miss Trimmer, whose eyes I have frequently seen red with tears of mortification, (of course at such an arrangement.)”

As Eva spoke, she was hastily putting on her things ; and promising Angelina, whose curiosity was aroused, to send her a line to say what the accident at Mrs. Trimmer’s was, Eva Morris hurried away.

CHAPTER XVI.

DISCIPLINE.

Eva Morris found the Trimmers in a dreadful state indeed! Captain Trimmer, purple with rage, was treading into a portmanteau some clothes handed to him by a pale and trembling footman; Mrs. Trimmer was in strong hysterics, and her shrieks, sobs, and shouts of wild frantic laughter, were replied to by the deep and dreadful naval oaths and curses of the Captain.

Eva was no coward, and she soon summoned presence of mind to inquire what had happened. The furious Captain, who before she appeared,

had been swearing by every fiend in hell, that he would break her every bone, was so much, to use his own language, "taken aback" by the calm dignity of her manner, that he replied with suppressed but bitter emotion—"That it was a mere nothing—an event common enough among the cursed daughters of the more cursed jades of fashion—but one, he thought, he and Mrs. Trimmer ill deserved. It was nothing," he added, "but that Miss Trimmer had chosen for herself—a very proper, suitable match, no doubt;" but as the elegant and lofty object of her choice had not thought proper to ask his consent, he swore with a hideous oath that he would have his heart's blood; and then, catching up a horsewhip, he with another horrid oath declared that he would not leave the bride till he had flayed her alive. "I thought," he growled, "she had known the sting of this, from her infancy upwards, too well to provoke it thus. What say you, Madam?" he added; "have I, or have I not, done my duty by her

Have I with any of them spared the rod?
Answer ! I insist."

"Nay, sir ! you have no power to insist with me, nor would I answer so violent and rude an exhortation, but that I respect the feelings of a father reaping the bitter fruits of his own ill-judged severity."

"Thank you, Madam—I dare say then you approve, perhaps have promoted, this damnable match ; but, mark me, Madam, if you have, I——"

"Stop, sir, before you degrade yourself by anything so ungentlemanly, nay, so unmanly, as abuse of a defenceless lady, let me assure you that it has always been my object to inculcate submission and obedience in your children to you, and that at this moment I am quite ignorant of what has happened. I do think, since you ask me my opinion of your stewardship of that most precious of treasures, your children's happiness, it has been ruined by a causeless severity and an injurious harshness. To escape from a

home embittered by so much rigour would be natural to any girl; and a father so lavish of his horsewhip, and a mother of her rod, must not wonder if their daughters take the earliest opportunity of seeking any shelter offered them from such cruel and degrading treatment."

Mrs. Trimmer had appeared to be quite insensible in her hysterics to all that was passing; but at this implied censure of herself, she ceased to shriek and sob, and assumed a belligerent attitude, glancing defiance at the pale, but resolute Eva.

"I know," added Eva, observing a change steal over the weather-beaten features of Captain Trimmer, and fancying that she saw a tear twinkle in his fiery eye—"I know that all you have done has been well meant—I know that you have often sacrificed your own feelings, your time, your pleasures, and your comfort to the system you thought the best; but the discipline of the quarter-deck will not do in the

drawing-room; and the chastisement which is of such doubtful avail with your sailors, is destruction to your daughter's affection and character. Still, I feel most deeply and sincerely for you, and beg you to tell me in what way I can aid or comfort you or Mrs. Trimmer in this great distress."

"If it had only been a gentleman," sobbed Mrs. Trimmer, while the rude and violent Captain, fairly convinced and subdued, turned away and wept like a child.

"And is it not?" faltered Eva, approaching Mrs. Trimmer, and taking her hand.

"Do you not know, then, who it is?" screamed Mrs. Trimmer.

"I have not the remotest idea."

"It is"—she began.

"It is," roared the Captain, again roused to ungovernable fury—"the most accursed knave, the most damnable hypocrite, the most beggarly, sneaking, canting, coaxing, ruffianly old scound-

drel, that ever howled for mercy and found"—as he added, with an oath too horrible to record—"this son-in-law of mine shall too."

So saying, he began again to tread into his portmanteau the shirts and stockings which the frightened footman had placed on a chair beside him.

"Then who is it?" whispered Eva to Mrs. Trimmer.

"That false, lying, canting, methodistical coachman, in whom we put such trust—that low, ugly, depraved old villain, Job Howler!"

Mrs. Trimmer, as she spoke, went off into a succession of strong real hysterics, and was conveyed to bed. Eva superintended her removal; and after consigning her to the care of a medical man and her own maid, she returned to the drawing-room to seek Captain Trimmer, and ascertain his wishes.

His portmanteau was packed, his cab at the door, he was fastening his great coat, and stood ready to depart, with his hat on; he looked so

stern, many women would have dreaded to approach him ; but Eva had in her gentle bosom a brave heart. She went up to him and said :—

“Though truth has compelled me to condemn your system, Captain Trimmer, there is nothing consistent with my views and opinions which I will not do to serve you. Tell me only how I can aid or comfort you, and you will find, that though I am no flatterer, I am a true friend. A kind word, a gentle look, a mild rebuke, will do more to recall your daughter than this”—and she touched his whip. “I doubt its use even with the wretched miscreant, who has doubtless won her by affecting that tenderness she never found in you, and which—so open is woman’s heart to the voice of tenderness and the semblance of indulgence—beguiled her even in such a man.”

“Miss Morris !” faltered the rough Captain, respectfully removing his hat as he approached her, “I believe you are right ; and yet I loved the girl, by G—— I loved my girl. When I

may return, or what I may do, I know not ; but if indeed you feel for me, a proud, fond, though perhaps mistaken father, so deceived, insulted, and degraded, you will do your utmost as preceptress of my other children, to counteract the evil effects of my discipline and their mother's. Make them, as much as you can, like yourself. Firm without boldness, and gentle without apathy—comfort their poor mother, and bid her farewell for me. Heaven only knows when I shall return. I shall spare my daughter for your sake ; but that accursed scoundrel——” He grasped his whip, and drew his hat over his eyes—then looked round again at Eva—removed his hat—approached her, and gently pressing her beautiful classical head, between his two large hands, he softly kissed her forehead, and saying, “God bless you—I leave all I love in your keeping”—the strange being strode down stairs, and left Eva to wipe away a tear.

On inquiry, she found that the wretched Job

Howler had availed himself of the trust reposed in him, and the long country walks enforced, to alarm the conscience, and to win the hitherto crushed affections, of Miss Trimmer. Gifted with a sort of canting and terrific eloquence, he had alarmed her by his Calvinistic doctrines into an idea she was predestined to be his; and then he had won her by a fondness which no one else had ever professed for her.

Being very cunning in this world's affairs, he had got himself privately married to her some weeks before their elopement; he had realized, too, a considerable part of her fortune, and had set sail with her for America, before the unhappy parents had the slightest suspicion of a man, in whom they had for years reposed the most implicit confidence.

Mrs. Trimmer was quite unable for a long time to resume her place in the establishment, and never again did she arm herself with all her terrors.

During Captain Trimmer's vain and pro-

tracted pursuit of the fugitives, Eva Morris felt herself bound by feeling and honour to remain with his children, who under her gentle government were happy as birds.

Angelina mourned, and Mrs. Luxmore openly lamented, but privately rejoiced, in this arrangement; and quietly our Beauty and her Mamma set out for Brighton.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. LUXMORE IN ITALY.

While Angelina and her mother effected a hasty and private retreat to Brighton, without allowing envy an opportunity of commenting on the change suffering had made in the Beauty's faultless face and perfect form, Mr. Luxmore languished in Italy, solitary, ill, and unhappy ; but yet assured by his medical men, that in no colder climate could he exist at all. For his daughter's sake, he wished that even such an existence should be prolonged, particularly as in all her letters she implored leave

to join him, and assured him that her health and strength were such as no climate was likely to impair.

During her illness, she of course had not written ; and as Mrs. Luxmore was extremely anxious to prevent her daughter's favourite scheme of joining Mr. Luxmore in Italy, Mrs. Luxmore took care, while adroitly concealing the real danger that existed, to make Mr. Luxmore think that Angelina's indisposition was of a nature which would render the air of the South particularly enervating and injurious. Mrs. Luxmore knew that, to the fond and anxious father, this would be enough. Much as he pined in a foreign land, among unsympathising, interested, and uncongenial foreigners, for the company of his only, his loved, his loving, and his lovely child, he would rather have died untended in his lonely exile, than have run the slightest risk of injuring her. Luckily the rapid decline of his bodily energies did not at all affect his mental powers.

His remarkable intellect and his literary tastes were as bright and fresh as ever, and the beautiful language and poetry of the land in which he now dwelt, were a source of quiet enjoyment, almost new to one who had hitherto confined himself principally to English literature and the classics. He formed a few friends, or rather intimate acquaintances, among those most likely to be of disinterested hearts, simple tastes, and quiet lives—namely, the learned; but he often found his purse was their sole object, and that while he sought friends in them, they were only looking for a patron in him. The disappointment was his alone. His aid, which he never had the heart to refuse, even to the professed canting beggars and recognised malingerers in England, he never withheld from any step-child of the Muses in any country; but he found little originality, and not much deep or real learning, among the boasting professors of the various universities of Italy.

He found no kindred spirit among the

descendants of ancient Rome, and none among the extravagant refugees from his own country. In his huge, half-furnished, dreary palazzo, poor Luxmore pined alone, longing in summer—scorching, dreadful summer—with an earnestness unspeakable, for his own shady arbour at Luxmore Park—and in the miserable rainy winter, for his dear fireside, with all its English comforts. True, he had an English valet, and a retinue of noisy, dirty, untidy, canting, boasting Italian servants; but the English valet was entirely taken up with his own discomforts, wearying his invalid master with his lamentations and regrets, shamming illnesses, and claiming all sorts of indulgences; among others, as he was become a sort of hundredth-rate *fanatico musiao*, he was always requiring permission to attend either the opera itself or the rehearsals, and any refusal on the part of his unfortunate master was a signal for all those irritating implied reproaches and regrets, known to all those who have ventured on the experi-

ment of taking English servants abroad ; and which, in the present case, was distressing indeed, as the poor invalid was dependent for every little comfort he yet possessed, on this discontented, encroaching, and impertinent fellow.

How through the long and dreary days of loneliness and languor did poor Luxmore long (not for his cold, vain, heartless wife—that delusion was for ever at an end,) but for his fond, bright, delightful Angelina, and poor Eva Morris—the patient, intellectual, devoted comforter of so many years. Sometimes in his misery and despair he had roused himself to send for them ; but he was always deterred by the dread of entailing on his darling girl any of the sufferings which made life such a burthen to himself—or of drawing down on the spotless Eva, any of the malice of those, who reveal their own corrupt hearts by their evil interpretation of all the affections of others. Under these circumstances, as his sense of loneliness and

banishment grew daily and hourly more unbearable, and as Mr. Frizz, his valet, grew daily and hourly more encroaching, impertinent, and music-mad, Mr. Luxmore had resolved to brave all, and repair to England, as he had some important affairs, connected with the arrangement of his property, yet to settle; and as his lawyer, who had promised to visit him in Italy for that purpose, had constantly put off what Mr. Luxmore felt his state of health rendered of immediate importance.

He had just astounded Mr. Frizz, (on one occasion when he was lamenting his exile) by announcing his probable return to England, when he was attacked by a sudden fit, probably brought on by the miserable excitement of his feelings. This fit was a prelude to many others, and to a long and serious illness. Mr. Frizz, who, in spite of all his lamentations, delighted in Italy and its *dolce far niente*, and who had besides formed an attachment for one of the chorus singers at the opera, took care to

give, in his letters to Mrs. Luxmore, a very favourable view of his master's state.

And while Angelina, now almost well, was anxiously tended at Brighton by her fond, ambitious mother and doating grandmother—and while the *beau monde* was full of her recovery—poor Luxmore, wretchedly ill, languished alone in his miserable exile, and would often have prayed for death, but for the pang he felt his loss would be to his daughter and his friend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DUKE OF DARTMOOR.

The Duke of Dartmoor was not long in discovering the Beauty's retreat, nor slow in availing himself of his knowledge, and following her to Brighton. He was in love—perhaps his was not a love quite as exclusive, as deep, and as involuntary as Poor George Darnly's. He loved as those love who have found but one beautiful and gifted being to cherish and to appreciate them; the Duke loved like what he was—the favourite of Nature and Fortune—the idol of women—the envied of men; but still,

though beloved by so many, he loved but one; he had fancied others, flirted with others; but it was reserved for our Angelina, to make him know that love which has as much of pain as of pleasure in its mysterious compound.

Yes Frederick Duke of Dartmoor loved quite well enough to think our Beauty more bewitching, with her white rose cheek, her languid glance, her drooping form, her little lace cap and tasteful wrapper, as she had ever been, in all the radiance of health and diamonds, roses and white satin.

Weakened by illness—deprived of the wholesome counsels and support of Eva Morris—persuaded by the auld Leddy, coaxed and flattered and bewildered by her own mother, and really touched by the love-prompted attentions, countless and impassioned, of one whose slightest notice gave its object a species of rank—one whose evident homage was a sort of pedestal to exalt our Beauty in the eyes of the imitative world, into a Goddess to be worshipped. An-

gelina began to persuade herself that it were better to live for the Duke of Dartmoor than to die of a broken heart for George Darnly. She began to recall the slight, the insult, the outrage which had been offered by an outcast, to one whom a Duke delighted to honour.

She tried to persuade herself that her love for George had been a girlish fancy, but that the Duke of Dartmoor was the object of her deliberate choice, her more experienced taste, and wiser affection. Alas! what has wisdom, what has deliberation, what has experience to do in these matters? when the meeting by chance, in an old letter, with the pale relics of a few wild flowers George had given her years before, raised in her heart a tumult, and sent to her cheek a glow which even her bridal bouquet from his Grace's hand could never cause.

Mrs Luxmore, with whom, as with a certain great man, expediency was a god, at whose shrine all things were to be sacrificed—know-

ing the poor girl well, and perceiving that, in spite of occasional fits of gaiety, vanity, and triumph, she was ill at ease in her mind and dejected at heart, boldly contrived to convey to Angelina—through Fichu, who was very anxious to see her young Lady a Duchess, and herself a Duchess's *femme de chambre*—an absurd and romantic fabrication of a love affair, of poor George's. Fichu managed this with so much tact, an assumed *naïvete*, that no doubt of his faithlessness to her, his first love, was left to poor Angelina's tortured heart; and the result was as satisfactory as Mrs Luxmore had hoped, and the auld Leddy had predicted it would be. Angelina's manner towards the Duke of Dartmoor assumed a softness and an interest it had never exhibited before; and while George Darnly, under a tropical sun, and in the midst of a protracted campaign, was performing those prodigies of valour, and of reckless daring, which are often characteristic of despair and a desire to die—and while in

spite of his imaginary wrongs and outrages, he every night prayed for Angelina's peace, and saw her angel beauty in his dreams—Frederick Duke of Dartmoor formally proposed to Miss Luxmore—and Angelina, with a pale cheek, and a heart in which hope seemed at that moment to expire, placed a cold hand in that his Grace so warmly extended—and Mrs Luxmore found them on her return, affianced lovers.

CHAPTER XIX.

I PROMESSI SPOSI.

The news of this brilliant proposal spread far and wide, and even envious Beauty rejoiced that such a rival as Angelina Luxmore would at any rate leave the field, although in a Ducal equipage. His Grace wished the marriage to take place that very autumn—already it was September; but Angelina, still weak from recent illness, and still at heart devoted to one she dared not even to think upon, insisted that it should not take place till the spring; and as she positively assured her mother that if she

opposed her in that determination, she would break off the match at once—Mrs. Luxmore adroitly veered round to her daughter's side, and his Grace was obliged to submit as best he might—solacing himself a little with the delightful intimacy of an affianced lover, and making Mrs. Luxmore promise to spend the autumn at one of his seats, where a widowed sister, the Dowager Countess of Oldbury, did the honours; and inviting himself to spend the Christmas vacation at Luxmore Park.

The brilliant conquest Miss Luxmore had made, and her consequent betrothal to the Duke of Dartmoor, were sources of much greater delight to that important personage than to the poor girl, who, though born and bred a beauty, and therefore unable to wage a long and successful war against the vanities of life, had still so fond and true a heart, that she would have preferred a cottage with George Darnly, had his love even appeared to her to approach the devotion and intensity of her own.

Indeed she would have remained faithful to George, and at once have rejected the Duke of Dartmoor, had not what she considered, (through the treachery of others) outrage, insult, and scorn been the reward of her unworldly devotion. In this, as in one to which we alluded formerly, the comparative calmness of the bride elect, did not diminish the happiness of the lover. All passion is a sort of fever, differing from other fevers, in that many of its symptoms and sensations are exquisitely pleasurable. Like other fevers, love has its crisis—it gradually increases till it reaches that crisis, and from that culminating point it as gradually declines; it may give way to a fond friendship, a tender affection, even to a deep devotion and a firm regard, more useful and more lasting far than love, mere love, can ever be; but they are not love; and though perhaps they may be productive of more happiness and more real comfort to their object than wild, exacting, restless passion ever was, still to him who feels that

passion, it is full of wild, delicious, and enthralling delirium, which no other affections bring. Moreover, this fever is protracted and its crisis averted by a certain line of treatment, whether voluntary or not on the part of its object. It has been quaintly said by an old writer, that love begins with the first sigh and ends with the first kiss; and though, perhaps, that remark borders on the extreme, still it is certain that the moment the object begins fully to reciprocate the lover's passion, that passion begins to wane.

And this was the secret of the long devotion of the age of chivalry. Whatever woman felt, it was the fashion of the times for her to seem indifferent and inaccessible; and the lover's passion lasted as long as the lady's reserve. Oh, what lesson to the fond and the forward! They complain of man's inconstancy and love of change; were they but true to themselves, man would not so often be found false and fickle; but it is his nature to sigh for the unattainable,

to pine for the withheld; and woman must choose between his love and her own. If she will feed the lamp of love in her own bosom, she extinguishes that in his; to be loved, she must not appear at least too loving. And though Angelina knew no theory on this subject, yet being by nature coy, and all the real passion of her young heart being engrossed and disappointed, she adopted, *sans s'en douter*, a line of conduct and a manner of all others calculated to keep alive the Duke of Dartmoor's passion.

She would not assume a tenderness and ardour she did not feel. If she had been playfully coy and apparently reserved with George, when love throbbed in every pulse, it was not probable she would be very fond or forward when only gratitude, regard, and esteem guided her feelings.

Gentle and affectionate by instinct, and playfully graceful by nature, Angelina was the very woman to be loved long and deeply. United

her charms, and as it were gilding
her, she possessed that rare and diffusive
grace, which, the offspring of intellectual quick-
ness and moral delicacy, grafted on a heart of
real benevolence. SHE NEVER OFFENDED EVEN
IN SPORT! Not from experience, not from
acquired knowledge of the world, not from
reflection; but from that quick perception
which enabled her to judge what would please
and what would wound; and that universal
kindness which made her as anxious to effect the
former as she was to avoid the latter. Added
to this, her manners were a rare and happy
mixture of ease and dignity, kindness and a
gentle maidenly reserve. And to that tact and
those manners, far more than to her surpassing
beauty, or her many accomplishments, did
Angelina owe the ever-increasing devotion, the
now entire subjugation of the most fastidious
man of his day, Frederick Duke of Dartmoor.
He had been (almost from his boyhood) so
fêted, petted, courted, idolized, and followed,

by Mothers and Daughters—Beauty and Talent had been so forced upon his notice—that he had often not been able to escape paying a passing tribute to its charms. Nor would he at eight-and-twenty have been still free to choose, had any one of the beauties who had won his passing fancy known how to keep the treasure she had caught. But that is a more difficult task. Some want of dignity or of delicacy in perception or in reserve—some too apparent an anxiety to be a Duchess—had disgusted him with many a beautiful and accomplished girl.

Owing to this, his reputation for fickleness and even inconstancy was established, and many an envious and disappointed beauty eagerly watched his engagement with Miss Luxmore, prophesying and hoping it would end like all his former flirtations. However, there seemed no chance of this. No Arcadian shepherd ever sate more patiently at his fair one's feet, or looked up into her eyes with more yearning

respectful love, than did Frederick Duke Dartmoor as he sate with Angelina on the shore, so placed that he might look up into bewitching face, and growing day by day more enamoured of its soft and brilliant beauty. As, there he lay, watching her every look, marking with ecstasy the freshening rose-tints of her cheek, singing (for though his voice was of little compass, his ear was perfect, and his taste most cultivated)—singing, reading, even reciting at her bidding, as if he were some poor and anxious aspirant, and not the Duke of Dartmoor and her affianced lover.

How from Terrace and Crescent did Envy, armed with a telescope, watch all this. His thousand thoughtful and minute attentions, his delicate forethought, his entire devotion!

His powdered and silk-stockinged footmen were allowed to bear to a certain distance his cloak, his books, his drawing materials, and baskets of fruit and flowers, and of anything he believed Angelina might fancy; but the privi-

lege of approaching her, of waiting on her, he reserved entirely to himself; and seeing it was his dearest delight, his labour of love, Angelina allowed him to place her on a perfect little pony, and walk by her side to some spot where he hoped the eye of the stranger would haunt him no more, and where and when he hoped the wild sea alone would witness a love boundless and tempestuous as itself.

Oh, how often, when almost in tears at some devoted and touching proof of her lover's tenderness, did Angelina wish that all the love she read in his passionate black eyes, and pale cheek, could awaken in her heart one emotion such as George's lightest glance had kindled. Oh, how did she try to reason herself into loving one so loveable and so loving; and what a failure Reason made of such an effort, as that cold, bungling spinster always does.

The auld Leddy Mc.Grigor had evinced an increase of hauteur and self-importance since the realisation of the second grand object of

her life. The first had been to secure a Duke for herself—we remember her bitter disappointment ; then the second was the seeing Angelina wedded to a Duke—and this seemed indeed so probable, as to be almost a certainty. Mrs Luxmore, who saw that the Duke of Dartmoor grew more and more devoted to Angelina, the more he had an opportunity of gazing at her beauty, and listening to her naïve, feminine, and pleasing conversation, and being besides little disposed to play any part but that of *Prima Donna*, left the lovers very much to themselves, and amused her own leisure with a few probationary flirtations, previous to filling up the vacancy in her foolish head, her vain existence, and her elegant establishment, left by the secession of that accomplished *ami de la maison*, Colonel Fitzgeorge.

Things were going on thus. The Duke was growing daily more enamoured of Angelina—and a sort of attachment, half gratitude and half esteem and admiration, began to lend some

interest to him and to her future life, in the eyes of Angelina. Her father, to whom the Duke had of course written at the outset of the affair, had given his cordial approval and delighted consent, and had signified his intention of repairing to England shortly to complete a settlement of his affairs, on which Angelina's prospects greatly depended.

Autumn began to give way to winter—Brighton to fill with a brilliant aristocracy; balls and concerts rivalled each other, and the Duke of Dartmoor and his bride-elect were the idols of the season. Universal homage and constant flattery began again to harden a little our Beauty's heart, and to make the perusal of Eva Morris's weekly sheet of counsel and exhortation, as distasteful as were her own hebdomadal confessions of vanity and folly, and which in an hour of better and holier feeling she had voluntarily bound herself to persevere in.

Dissipation, with her odious offspring Folly,

Vanity, and Selfishness, began again to fill up our Beauty's life. Mrs. Luxmore had formed a dangerous intimacy with some favourite Beauties of a profligate court—women remarkable for charms of person and manner, but totally wanting in principle and feeling. Their fascinations were soon exerted to secure among their intriguing forces, a being of such exquisite beauty and talent as our Angelina.

It was not long before her vain heart imbibed something of the ambitions of those about her. She saw them plot and plan and intrigue, to shine in the blaze's half-extinguished eyes of the monarch of England and of Fashion, and she began to experience a wish to show how easily she could achieve, without effort, the triumph they so toiled to secure.

An invitation to the Pavilion soon gave our Beauty the opportunity she desired; and as even the Duke of Dartmoor wished to show his conquest to so great a connoisseur in beauty as the fourth George, he entered warmly into all

the arrangements for the approaching fête at the palace, and was as anxious as Mrs. Luxmore, the auld Leddy, or Angelina herself, that the Beauty should receive the only confirmation yet wanting to her claim as Queen of Beauty—the recognition of her sovereignty by the greatest connoisseur of the day, and the king of that Isle, which may indeed be designated as the Isle of Beauty.

CHAPTER XX.

THE COURT.

The atmosphere of a Court has generally been pronounced fatal to singleness of heart and simplicity of mind; and though we have convincing proofs that its rulers may preserve their individuality, and that the habit of commanding homage and of granting favours, rather adds to the dignity of the soul and the grandeur of the heart, there is no doubt that constant sense of inferiority—the struggle for favour—the perpetual cabal—the mean ambition—and the constant intrigue, destroy all that

is pure and noble in the male character—all that is feminine and delicate in the female mind. Angelina's new associates, specious, fascinating, and brilliant, were indeed most dangerous to her disappointed mind. They quickly discovered that the Duke of Dartmoor had no power to fill her young, enthusiastic heart; and as several among them had long coveted his Grace for themselves, and bitterly envied our Beauty her distinguished conquest, they formed a cruel cabal, and a treacherous plot, to rob Angelina of her brilliant prospects, and her envied Intended. They knew full well, that though the Duke of Dartmoor might covet for his bride-elect the admiration of the first connoisseur in Beauty, and the most illustrious personage in the world, he was far too deeply in love, and far too exalted in principle, to share with any monarch the smiles of his intended wife, or to connive at any of those arrangements, with which custom had rendered them but too familiar.

Perceiving in Angelina a boundless vanity, a fund of ambition, and a real anxiety about her rank as the Queen of Beauty ; aware, too, that that rank had yet to be confirmed by the great Autocrat of Fashion, and that Angelina trembled at the possibility of its being questioned by him ; they, judging of her by their own mean and intriguing natures, and convinced that they themselves would make any sacrifice for regal smiles—resolved so to counsel one, in whose experienced and well-judging eyes, they felt sure she would seem most exquisite, that she should commit herself to win the favour which should appear to be withheld, that in pique, in jealousy, and in anxiety about the reputation of her beauty, she would be easily induced to act in a manner which, adroitly revealed to his Grace the Duke of Dartmoor, would induce him to break off the envied engagement, and leave the now triumphant, exalted, and spotless Beauty—the outwitted,

deceived, and jilted victim of a court cabal, and the laughing-stock of a once admiring world.

How cat-like were the manoeuvres—how smooth the caresses—how watchful the glances—and how ready the attack of these base and heartless women ; and how unsuspectingly did Angelina suffer them to excite in her vain breast, a succession of doubts and hopes and fears relative to the fiat of one, whose smile was rank, whose word was law, and whose indifference was downfal, in the world of taste.

The important evening came. All that the toilet could do to heighten the perfect beauty of Angelina Luxmore, was done. Excitement and anxiety lent an unusual fire to her eyes, and a lovely mutability to her transparent complexion.

The well-bred Duke, with all his innate nonchalance, could scarcely conceal his triumph and his ecstasy. Mrs. Luxmore was in a fever of delight ; and the auld Leddy declared

Angelina was "her very sel of fifty years gane by." Angelina made as sure of her triumph, as the French did of the victory at Waterloo. What then was her disappointment, her dismay, her vain and secret anguish, when her appearance at the palace, (though it certainly made sufficient sensation among the court) made no apparent impression whatever with its Chief—when no appropriate and graceful compliment from one, who had indeed, when he wished it, the good fairy's gift, and could drop words that were gems—when no expressive smile, or pointed condescension, or peculiar notice of any kind, acknowledged in her the Queen of Beauty!

Oh! this was bad enough to one so vain; and Angelina could scarcely restrain the tears of bitter mortification! Her manner grew constrained—her bloom left her cheek—she felt for the first time the miseries of failure—failure in a mean and paltry ambition—in which, to the well-thinking, success would have

been no glory ; but failure, which she read in her lover's looks of blank disappointment, while, by more earnest attention, he tried to conceal his own disappointment, and to console her in hers—failure, which she read in the bridling of the auld Leddy, and the angry quivering of her towering plumes—failure, legible in her mother's flushed cheek and restless looks—and in the ill-suppressed triumph of her coterie of “ friends at court.”

But the measure of Angelina's distress was not yet full. Angelina had been for some time in silent anguish and mortification, with down-cast eyes, impatiently pulling to pieces some flowers of rare beauty, in a bouquet his Grace had given her—when suddenly a soft buzz of admiration attracted her attention. The Chief was bending, with a gallant and courtly grace, to some Beauty whom he evidently delighted to honour. The mean and imitative courtiers saw with his eyes, and fawned when he smiled. What graceful head bends low to that whis-

pered compliment? what lovely form bows in speechless ecstasy beneath that magic smile of regal lips? Angelina's heart beat quick, her hand trembled, her colour came and went. Those black and pearl-braided tresses—that finely developed bust—that Queenly form!—those sweeping robes of classic cut!—that dazzling cestus—and that Pasta-like air!—they announce—what?—Yes, it is indeed so! The Lady Emmeline! And stealing a furtive glance at her agitated mother, Angelina encountered, fixed on her with a fiend-like triumph, the light, phosphoric eyes of the Honourable Captain Mc.Quibble, whose pale features (distorted, as they were, by a bitter sneer) seemed to her those of her evil genius. Nor was she more at ease when she perceived that this powerful and bitter enemy was honoured by the most condescending kindness of the illustrious personage before her, and felt sure that several jokes, which found favour in the eyes of royalty, were levelled at her; while the Captain was equally

successful in securing for his own bride-elect (the Lady Emmeline) that homage which, from such a source, established her the Queen of Beauty.

CHAPTER XXI.

FRIENDS AT COURT.

That night Angelina's pillow was wet with bitter tears; but they were tears that excite no interest, no sympathy—tears, that sprung from the unpitied woes of Vanity and foiled Ambition! How disgusted did she feel with herself, the court, Captain Mc.Quibble, the Lady Emmeline, and all the odious, hollow world! How did she wish she had never enlisted under the flimsy banner of Fashion—in the despicable ranks of Intrigue and Vanity.

Oh, how did she wish she could exchange for

all this hollow pageant, some dear and quiet country home, with George (such as she once believed and loved him)—with her noble, her excellent father—and Eva, that truest of true friends! How sure did she feel, as she languidly made her toilet, that her miserable failure was at that moment the laugh of the court, the delight of Lady Emmeline, and the subject of the bitter and vindictive muse of the odious Mc.Quibble.

When at length she was drest, she learnt from Fichu, that *Madame était fort indisposée*; and repairing with some anxiety to her mother's room, she found that lady only very much indisposed to listen to anything she tried to say to comfort or to console her, and, in short, in the very worst of those ill humours which weak minds indulge at the approach of disappointment.

Perceiving this, Angelina made a hasty retreat; and taking a serious and well-written book in her hand, she determined to subdue in her own heart, its spirit of restless vanity,

ambition, and selfishness, and to arm herself so strong in philosophy and good sense, that the shafts of envy and of malice should have no power to wound her. She had got through a few pages on the corruption of the human heart, when Sneak brought up 'the Viper,' that fashionable magazine of scandal, calumny, and venom, to which it was whispered that Captain Mc.Quibble was one of the principal contributors ; nay, some went so far as to accuse him of the editorship of a paper at once clever, unprincipled, and even scurrilous.

At first Angelina, convinced that its contents were of a nature sure to mortify and to wound her, determined to defeat the mean malignity of those who had probably sent it, and not even to glance at its venomous pages ; but, by degrees, curiosity and anxiety, aided by vanity, got the better of her resolution, and in an evil hour, she tore open its wretched and stinging pages.

Poor Angelina ! the Queen of Beauty—the Idol of the beau monde—the Intended of the

Duke of Dartmoor—and the loved of George Darnly—fed on the honey of flattery—prepare now to banquet on stings! With pale lips, distended eyes, and changing hue, Angelina read on. She found herself almost the sole object of the Viper's venom. So thinly veiled as to be almost actionable, in one brilliantly malignant article after another, was Angelina held up to the ridicule of the world. So pointed, so witty, so amusing even, were the odious attacks made upon her, that Angelina felt sure they had by that time made her the jest and the laughing-stock of every breakfast-table, every club, every reading-room, in the kingdom. Angelina tried to laugh off her sense of bitter mortification and unbearable annoyance; but it was in vain. She buried her face in her hands, and tried to shut out the mocking words of the odious Viper, and the malicious ridicule of each well-written article; but it was all in vain.

Wounded delicacy—pride, vanity, ambition defeated—jealousy, and even envy aroused—

filled the tortured heart of our once triumphant Beauty; and throwing herself on a couch, in an agony, prompted chiefly by the sudden conviction that these horrid calumnies and stinging lampoons would perhaps one day meet the eyes of George Darnly, and teach him to despise her even more than he already did, Angelina gave way to her misery, and burst into a passion of tears. It was in this state that she lay, when the door was flung open, and Lady Cajolerie and the Honourable Mrs. Fathom were ushered by Sneak into the presence of the weeping Beauty.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

It was a moment or two before Sneak was aware of the presence of his young mistress; and Angelina herself was so absorbed by her grief and mortification, and was sobbing so bitterly in the reckless anguish of her heart, that the names of her Court friends were repeated, before she started from the sofa, and stood with tear-stained cheeks and disordered looks before them, vainly trying to account for and excuse the state in which they had found her.

The words, "head-ache," and "nervous

attack," were all her invention supplied; but the large, watchful, blue eyes of Lady Cajolerie, and the quick, sharp glances of Mrs. Fathom, had detected, on the breakfast table, the presence of the "Viper;" and as it was owing to their friendly offices that Angelina had so early been furnished with a copy of the vile lampoons it contained, these amiable ladies exchanged a look of triumph; and taking each a seat beside Angelina, they began, with well assumed interest, to question and to condole.

"What can have overcome our lovely friend?" said Mrs. Fathom, taking her hand; "some lover's quarrel with a certain gay Duke?"

Angelina faintly smiled; there was nothing in the question or the subject to interest her much.

"I am afraid you spent a dull evening at the Palace, sweetest!" said Lady Cajolerie, playing with Angelina's long, unbound tresses. How much you were admired—you created a wonderful sensation!"

"Indeed!" said Angelina, unsuspectingly, "I thought quite the reverse. I fancy, fair ladies, we were all quite eclipsed!"

"Oh, you mean by that odious Lady Emmeline; but any notice she obtained in a certain quarter, was not owing, I assure you, to her charms, but to that vile little Mc.Quibble's influence. That man may almost be called the Belle-Maker, as Warwick of old was the King-Maker; he sets us up and takes us down, just as we happen to please or offend him. I believe that man could make a woman the rage by one stroke of his pen, and the laughing-stock of the world by another. But to my taste, Lady Emmeline is a perfect fright! no feature, no expression!

"And such a dowdy!" echoed Lady Cajolerie. "Talk of her figure! why, I believe she doesn't wear stays!"

"For a very good reason," said Mrs. Fathom; "how could she bear them so stout as she is! I assure you her waist is double mine in size—

I know that as a fact, for I had it from Louisa Peerwell, who is her bosom friend, and who told me besides, that those fine black, arched brows are picked out and pencilled, and her lips dyed—you know of what a bright rasy tint her lips are—well, they are dyed with henna. No old Dowager is more made up than Lady Emmeline; and if ever she offends Mc.Quibble, he will expose her, for nothing escapes him. By the bye, have you seen the “Viper,” sweet friend? I have not yet had time to glance at it”—and she extended her hand.

Angelina made one faint effort to prevent, but her Court friends were too quick for her; and pretending not to be aware that the lampoons were aimed at her, they read them with apparent admiration and relish.

“I wonder who he can mean?”

“It is excruciatingly witty and sarcastic,” said Mrs. Fathom.

"Have you really no idea whom he means?" asked the simple and credulous Angelina.

"Not the slightest."

"I wish every one else were as blind," faltered Angelina, and burst into tears.

"My sweet girl!" cried Lady Cajolerie.

"My lovely friend!" said Mrs. Fathom.

"Impossible!" cried the former.

"Absurd!" exclaimed the latter.

And then both re-read the articles, and pondered, and ejaculated, and argued, and finally yielded; and then both were lavish in abuse of Mc.Quibble, and united in endeavouring to rouse in Angelina, the pride of an offended beauty, and the ambition of a deposed sovereign.

"Whatever Mc.Quibble may imply, Lady Emmeline did not make as much impression in a certain quarter as I know who," smiled Mrs. Fathom; "only she is artful and daring at heart; under that soft and timid manner, she knows the truth of the French song"—and

taking up Angelina's guitar, the pretty and sprightly Mrs. Fathom sang, in a sweet voice and playful manner, the following words.

"Jeunes filles ! qui pour votre âme,
Voulez un amant, dont la flamme,
S'accroisse encore par vos refus,
On n'en fait plus ! on n'en fait plus !
Voulez vous un beau jeune homme,
Partout vous cite, partout vous nomme
Tant de vos faveurs il fait cas
Oh nous n'en manquerez pas !"

"Certainly," sneered Lady Cajolerie, "I believe that Lady Emmeline is one who knows that flattery and favours win more hearts and more renown than even an Angelina's beauty and merit ; and though I should not quite like to imitate her policy, I believe, as far as its wisdom goes, she is right. It is man, now a days, that ' must be wooed, and not unsought be won !' And if that is the case with the mere herd of Peers and Members of Parliament, how much more so must it be with that spoiled child of fortune—that idol of the women—

"that gloss of fashion and mould of form"—
the first in station as in every winning attribute."

"You are enthusiastic, Cora," said Lady Cajolerie; "Miss Luxmore smiles dissent."

"Not I indeed!" said Angelina; "I coincide in all Mrs. Fathom has said, so far am I from saying with the old song—

"I ne'er could any lustre see,
In eyes that did not shille on me"—

Yet; though it cannot have escaped you, or any at the palace last night, that no notice was taken of me in a quarter where notice is rank—still all I had heard of the wit, grace, dignity, and fascination of a certain illustrious individual, was surpassed, to my mind, in the ——— last night!"

"My sweet girl! are you really in earnest?" cried Mrs. Fathom, springing up and embracing Angelina.

"My darling Angelina!" lisped Lady Cajolerie—"your star forthwith begins to culminate."

nate—you will be reinstated Queen of Beauty, and the vile usurper will be deposed ere long!"

"What can you mean?" asked Angelina.

"Mean! why this—we are in the confidence of the——" And she looked very significantly in the direction of the Palace. "We know a good deal of the *dessens des cartes*, and the real tastes and opinions of one too great to be lightly named; Angelina, the whole thing was a farce—a *ruse*—you made a deep and vivid impression in a certain quarter. It rests with you for that impression to be increased, and revealed to an imitative world—at once restoring to the place you once held in public opinion, but with added honours, added éclat, added glory! But I warn, you must bear your honours meekly—you must be grateful! no haughty repulses, or coy reserves. Read and wonder, at your own good luck."

Angelina read. It was a note, elegantly worded, beautifully expressed; it conveyed a

most flattering tribute to her charms, and a delicate confession that they had been but too deeply felt. There was no signature; but the tenor of the note, and its language, left no doubt on Angelina's mind to whom to attribute it, and a thousand emotions dyed her cheeks with blushes, and filled her eyes with tears.

"Of course you must answer it, my love!" said Lady Cajolerie.

"Let me suggest the reply," said Mrs. Fathom.

"Thank you," said Angelina; "my own heart suggests that, but I shall require some little time to consider and to reflect."

"Exactly!" replied Lady Cajolerie; "we have a few calls to make, and on our return we will drop in again for your answer. Let your heart speak. Enthusiasm, particularly in one so young and beautiful, is very delightful to one accustomed to the spiritless women of the world. *Naïveté* is sure to please. Let your

heart speak, my love !” added Lady Cajolerie ; and embracing Angelina, they departed.

Angelina remained some time in silent thought. There was to be a fête at the palace on the following day, and probably, if her answer were such as to please the refined taste of her illustrious correspondent, he would take as much pains to exalt and distinguish her, as he had before done to humble her pretensions, and to raise those of Lady Emmeline ; besides who would know at what an expenditure, of what she felt in her inmost heart to be female dignity, she had purchased those envied smiles—those much prized tributes. What a triumph over Mc.Quibble and his false idol. She seized her pen ! but no—as she did so, her eyes fell on the little dilapidated ring which she still wore, and which not even the cruelty and faithlessness which she believed George had evinced, had been able to induce her to part with. With that ring were associated all the purity of the early youth, over which Eva Morris had

withheld—all the loyalty of that first love, which, in its balanced influence, is often to woman's heart "the angel of life." What would George think of a step so forward, so undignified? of tributes she had so courted? Anguish hurried her feet for a moment to her hands, and her resolution was taken. She wrote a few lines, full of dignity and purity of thought and feeling, and in language which her good angel seemed to prompt, so happily did it kind a nobly generous, and rejection of a questionable suit, and a touching loyalty and assurance for the gentleman she addressed.

When she had done this, she felt more composed; principle and delicacy had triumphed over vanity, and she experienced that self-respect which is so essential to the peace of any delicate and reflecting woman.

Lady Capelton and Mrs. Estlin soon returned from visits paid to members of a coterie belonging to the heartless clique which had united in playing off on our heroine a cruel and

beguiling hoax. This clique, every member of which was bitterly envious of the beauty and the prospects of Miss Luxmore, was assembled at the house of one of its leaders, awaiting the return of Lady Cajolerie and Mrs. Fathom, with Miss Luxmore's letter.

The ladies were disappointed at finding that Miss Luxmore had sealed her letter; but they made no comment, and departed.

The odious coterie was soon assembled, and the doors carefully closed. Lady Cajolerie produced the letter.

"We are all agreed," she said, "that this note shall find its way, not to him it is intended for, but to his Grace the Duke of Dartmoor."

"We are!"

"And we all bind ourselves to an inviolable secrecy, as to the little innocent forgery to which it is a reply."

"We do."

"*Allons, courage, then!*"

And Lady Cajolerie lighted a taper, while

the Honourable Mrs. Fathom prepared to soften the seal—an art in which practice had made her perfect.

All the eager, painted, and made-up faces of the Court ladies met, in their intense curiosity and anxiety, over the letter of poor Angelina; and all these faces grew blank with disappointment and chagrin, when the delicacy and high principle of the writer, couched in language at once eloquent and touching, met the hardened and astounded ears of Angelina's friends at Court.

The eldest lady of the clique was a Dowager Aunt of his Grace the Duke of Dartmoor, (who had one young and blooming hoyden daughter, first Cousin to his Grace, and for whom he had a sort of brotherly regard, which she warmly reciprocated); it was to the mother a most important object to disenchant her nephew with Miss Luxmore, as the darling scheme of her heart was to marry him to her own child. This

lady, with the words, "Shrewd little hypocrite ! she has outwitted us !" turned away.

"Is it art or simplicity?" asked Lady Cajolerie, who never having felt any principle in herself, had no faith in that of others. "She is either cunning or stupid."

"Certainly!" said Mrs. Fathom; "but as this well-laid scheme has turned out a complete failure, I propose we destroy both the copy of our note, and this piece of folly or of art. *N'importe*, we are only where we were; to-morrow Lady Emmeline will again eclipse this creature at the fête at the palace, for I doubt not, in order to keep up her character with the ———, the little prude will affect a great deal of reserve, and being so much alarmed as to be quite alarming, thoroughly disgust one already no admirer of Misses in their teens."

"Perhaps after all," whispered Mrs. Fathom to the Duke's Dowager Aunt, "the seeing his Intended slighted by the first judge of women in the world, may have the effect we had ex-

pested from this innocent little plot. And now let us tear up our clever forgery, and the little prude's stupid reply. Here is ours—I contrived to sieze on it while the Beauty was admiring her new pink bonnet in the glass."

The forgery and Angelina's note were torn up, and thrown behind the bouquet of artificial dahlias which filled the grate, and the disappointed and crest-fallen clique repaired down stairs to luncheon. They were scarcely gone when, from behind the ample draperies of blue damask which shrouded the windows, a bright, laughing face looked out like a star, flinging back the clustering chesnut locks from her open brow, and laughing so that the whitest of white teeth glistened between the most vermilion of lips. The Hebe form and face of the young Lady Ada Loft, daughter of the old Dowager, and cousin of the Duke of Dartmoor, appeared. With a taper white finger on her arch red lips, she stole to the fire-place, and hastily caught

up the fragments of the forgery, and the Beauty's reply.

"This comes," she said to herself, "of treating me like a baby, and not taking me into their counsels. Now I'll outwit them all, and set all the Court by the ears. Poor Miss Luxmore! and poor Frederick! I know he loves her. Why cannot Mamma leave them at peace, and let me chuse for myself. However, I will, and I'll stick these together, and show them to cousin Frederick, and tell him all I've heard; and as long as he doesn't, implicate me, he may, do what he likes about it—plotting, caballing, old frumps, keeping me out of every secret and every party!"

Lady Ada was as good as her word. With a perseverance which belongs to our earliest teens, she matched and pasted together, both the forgery and Angelina's reply. And the first time the Duke took a walk with his pretty hidden cousin, she revealed to him the whole

base and heartless intrigue, and gave him the papers, in confirmation of her story.

The Duke, touched to the heart by his Angelina's dignified and beautiful reply—and detesting the whole clique with which she had lately been far too intimate for his taste—promptly resolved on his Revenge. Being a personal intimate of the great personage, with whom the reckless and daring clique had taken so unwarrantable a liberty, he made that august individual acquainted with the whole affair, and even laid before him the insolent forgery, and the maidenly and affecting reply.

The result was, that at the fête, to which all had so looked forward, and one of the amusements of which was a sort of mock tournament, or passage of arms, the whole clique of Court ladies was received with marked coldness, by the illustrious Prince. Lady Emmeline was scarcely distinguished, and Angelina was received with a degree of favour the more delightful, because in it admiration was blended with respect.

The victor Knight, who was the Duke of Dartmoor himself, guided at once by his own heart and his Prince's eyes, named Angelina, "*Reine de la Beauté et des Amours!*" and such was she crowned with a wreath of white roses, made of orient pearls, and gemmed with dew-drops of costly brilliants, by the graceful hand of one who enhanced every honour he conferred, and every compliment he paid, by words of unrivalled point and elegance, and a smile, which those who once beheld it, could neither depict nor forget.

Mc.Quibble's venom and dismay caused him a fever, which for some time robbed the "Viper" of his cutting contributions; and on his recovery, he found himself at once out of pocket, and out of favour at Court, and minus his bride-elect, the Lady Emmeline, who had eloped with a handsome young guardsman, as simple and good-humoured as Mc.Quibble was clever and ill-natured. The odious clique

was broken up, and no member of it ever regained her place in the royal favour.

Angelina closed her season at Brighton, more courted, more admired, more envied, and more hated, than ever!—the undisputed, crowned, acknowledged Queen of Beauty—more idolised than ever by the Duke of Dartmoor, and daily becoming more and more dependent on universal flattery, general adulation, and the boundless homage of all mankind!

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RETURN.

The autumn passed gaily at the Duke of Dartmoor's, and Christmas brought its wonted festivities at Luxmore Park; but still the excellent Luxmore remained abroad, too ill even to leave his room, (much more to brave the change of climate at such a season.)

Angelina's giddy head was full of her conquests, her triumphs, and all the vanities and follies which make up the existence of a Beauty à la mode; but in her heart there was an aching void. Solitude was odious to her, for with

solitude came some inevitable self-reproach, self-examination, and the thought of George—George, who had so distinguished himself, and performed such prodigies of reckless valour, that he had already obtained his company, aided by the luck which so often attends daring and despair, and the loss of many of his fellow officers, (both in battle, and from the many dreadful maladies incidental to the climate.)

The Duke of Dartmoor, more and more enamoured, grew daily more impatient for Angelina to fix the day, that was to make him the happiest of Dukes, and his idol a Duchess. And the more he urged his suit, and the more her mother seconded his claim, the more did Angelina shrink from the fulfilment of her promise, and the more did her unhappy heart suggest the possible return of George.

Mrs. and Miss Luxmore were again in London, with the auld Leddy; the season had commenced early, and with spirit; a splendid drawing-room had already been held, at which

Angelina had astonished by her charms, even the cold gaze of the *élite*, and dazzled the eyes and bewildered the brains of all those admiring and envious groups who, from balconies, carriage windows, and shop doors, watch the plumed and jewelled Beauties and Frights of every age, on their way to pay the homage they receive elsewhere.

The Court ball too had been given, at which Angelina, personally brought forward by "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," had received the tributes of all the foreign potentates then in England; and were so unaccustomed to such features, and such golden locks, such bloom and such a form, at once slight as Psyche's and rich as Hebe's, that their admiration had in it something of astonishment and even ecstasy.

Yes, Angelina's bloom was now quite restored, and, if possible, a little more matured; her hair had grown enough to wave in graceful curls down her beautiful neck; but still some

frivolous head-dress was required in full-dress. Her life was now one giddy maze of thoughtless vanity and dissipation—one whirl of gaiety and triumph. Yet, bright as were her looks and as was her laugh in public, in private her spirits were very uncertain; and often before she felt equal to play her usually sprightly part at ball or festival, she had recourse to the hateful stimulants which all require who drain the cup of pleasure to the dregs.

She seldom rose till one, after breakfast; then her toilette occupied two hours, then a bevy of beaux awaited her; then the parks, the gardens, or some lion of the day. Jaded and worn out with the fatigue and excitement, which, monotonous as it was, she now began really to require, Angelina returned home to dress for some late dinner, or succession of evening amusements; generally she went fairly to bed for an hour or two, where *Fisch* brought her a cup of *café noir*, or strong green tea, both slow poisons; and she rose excited, if not

refreshed, to make another protracted toilette, and recommence the labour of pleasure.

One night Angelina was seated at her toilet, — *Fichu* in ecstasies at the effect of a new head-dress, and the brilliancy of a robe of silver tussus. Angelina heard her attendant's raptures, and saw her beauty reflected in the glass; but still tears filled her eyes, and sobs at length escaped her bosom. *Fichu* brought the accustomed cordial (alias dram), in the shape of salvolatile and red lavender; but it was all in vain—Angelina was miserable. The Duke of Dartmoor's importunities had prevailed, and a few days before, she had yielded a languid assent to his passionate entreaty, and consented to fix the wedding-day at a month from that time.

Fichu, distressed and frightened, did all she could to cheer her young mistress; and among other things, she went in search of a newspaper, in which was a brilliant account of a Gourt ball,

at which Angelina had appeared a few nights back.

Angelina languidly cast her eye over the article, but changed colour when, a little lower down, she saw an article headed, "The Romance of Reality, and the Reality of Romance, or a Duke and a dilemma." It ran as follows.

"It is rumoured that the uncle of a certain Duke, first in fashion, fortune, and favour with the fairest of the fair of May Fair, has recently made a discovery, which is likely to furnish ample employment to the Gentlemen of the long robe. The details of this mysterious revelation are said to be more romantic and astounding than those of any novel ever published. A certain aspiring Beauty will probably see the coronet evade her grasp, just as she was about to clutch it; but we forbear to anticipate, what will probably ere long occupy the first lawyers of the day, and fully engross the public attention."

A suspicion crossed Angelina's mind, that the paragraph alluded to her affianced, the Duke of Dartmoor. For two days he had been absent on important business, and had not found time even to send her a line or a bouquet. Still he was to be at the ball, (a ball at her own home,) and the thought which had overcome her just as her toilet was completed, was that he would remind her of her promise, and perhaps endeavour even to accelerate their union; but if the article she had just read, had called the colour to her cheeks, it quite deserted them when, in another part of the paper, she saw among the arrivals at a neighbouring Hotel, the name of Captain George Darnly, of the —— regiment, on leave of absence, to recover from the effects of a severe wound.

The paper fell from her hands, the room swam round with her.

"Oh, George!" she murmured, "we shall meet! my heart fortells that all will be explained, all forgiven—and I am free no more!"

The paragraph, whose mysterious innuendoes seemed so to affect the title and fortune of her affianced, had only brought to her cheek "the orient blush of quick surprise;" but the announcement that Gorge Darnly was again in England, again so near her! checked the quick tide of life in her heart, and ere Fichu could extend her arms to save her, Angelina sank lifeless on the floor.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PERIL.

Mrs. Luxmore's ball was at its height, before her beautiful daughter was sufficiently recovered to make her appearance. *Fitch* had confided to her mistress both Angelina's distress and her swoon, and that Lady, searching the paper for the cause of so much emotion, had met with the mysterious paragraph, headed the "Romance of Reality," and had no doubt that it had caused her daughter's indisposition. She looked no further, and marvelled not at Angelina's distress, when she found that it left a

most painful and anxious feeling in her own heart.

However, she smoothed her brow, and resolved to await the arrival of his Grace before she formed any opinion on the subject; but she could not be blind to the fact, that some important mystery (not meant to meet her ear) occupied the attention of her fashionable guests, and that more than once, at her approach they broke off suddenly, and exchanged glances of great significance.

However, the *entrées* of the Queen of Beauty and of the ball, soon withdrew all attention from the mother, to rivet it on the daughter, whose marble-like pallor lent an interest to her features, which no bloom, however peerless, could have imparted, and whose anxious looks, and evident suffering, were all connected forthwith with the rumours afloat about her Bridegroom-elect, the Duke of Dartmoor.

Angelina felt that she was closely watched, and this gave an additional uneasiness to her

countenance, and restraint to her manner. She felt a strange, inexplicable, and thrilling presentiment, that she should behold George that night, and every time a guest was announced, she started, changed colour, and looked towards the door. The curious and the envious, of course attributed all this to the non-arrival of the expected Duke. Mrs. Luxmore did the same ; and her own anxiety kept pace with what she believed her daughter's to be. People stayed till they could stay no longer, and still he came not ; and the last guests departed, and Angelina and her mother found themselves by the light of chandeliers, half extinguished, struggling with the intrusive dawn, alone, in the now hushed and deserted ball-room. Mrs. Luxmore was very anxious to discuss with her daughter the paragraph in the paper, and the Duke's absence, but observing her exhausted looks and drooping attitude, she persuaded her to go to her room, and wisely resolved to

broach no agitating subject till Angelina was restored by a few hours' repose.

On her dressing table Angelina found a beautiful bouquet, and concealed in its leaves a billet. For a moment a wild hope that it came from George Darnly made her tremble, so that she could scarcely break the seal ; but a moment later she saw through her tears the Ducal coronet, and with a sickening feeling of disappointment, she opened the note.

“ My own Angelina must be aware, that nothing but imperative necessity could keep from her side, one who only seems to live in her presence. Alas ! dearest, I am involved in a most troublesome, and, as it appeared at first, a most dreadful business ; but I believe now it will prove to be a mere conspiracy—a cruel one if it only keeps me a few days from your enchanting presence. You shall hear from me soon, again, unless kind Fate grants my prayer, and allows me to throw myself at

your feet to-morrow. Take no heed of malignant rumours; I trust now they are without foundation.

“Your devoted,

“DARTMOOR.”

Angelina coldly put the beautiful bouquet in water, and passionately kissed the now thriving myrtle George had given her; and then, without one glance at the mirror, she allowed *Flo* (half asleep as she was) to disrobe her, and ere long she fell into a fevered sleep. She had been dreaming of George, and groves of myrtle and bowers of orange flower, when a series of loud cries, which at first blended themselves with her dream, awoke her; and sitting up in her bed, startled and amazed, she gradually became aware that the loud cries she heard, were “Fire! fire!” and that a suffocating smoke filled her room.

Angelina rushed to the window. In the grey dawn, she saw a mob assembled, and be-

came convinced that her own abode was the object of alarm, and of the engines which began to play upon it.

A horrible dread seized on the poor girl's heart; her room was on the second floor, and no one but *Fichu* slept on the same story; a red light began to appear under the door, and every moment the smoke seemed more dense and suffocating.

Not knowing what she did, Angelina opened her door. Oh, horrible sight! the staircase was on fire. Mrs. Luxmore, on the first floor, was calling wildly on her child, and was only withheld by main force, from climbing the blazing steps. *Fichu*, who had darted up into the garrets, was shrieking like a maniac. Angelina closed her door, to shut out the curling, winding flames; and trying to collect herself, began to consider what could be done. The windows of her room—that room which in her infancy had been her nursery, were barred, and this circumstance seemed to crush all hopes of exit, even

could she make herself heard amid the din of shrieks, oaths, curses, and squabbles, attendant on a fire. Every moment seemed a century. The flames began to curl under the door, the room was full of a lurid glare, and death seemed frightfully inevitable. Angelina threw herself on her knees, and prepared to die. Fichu's shrieks, and Mrs Luxmore's cries of ineffable anguish, were heard no more ; and Angelina, after one prayer, in which even at such a time George had a part, roused to more intense terror by the actual ingress of the frightful flames, flew to the window, clung to the bars in anguish and horror unspeakable, and cried aloud to those below to save her.

The red and dreadful light within, made her slight form, in her white night-dress, horribly apparent, and a shudder ran through the crowd.

"She might be saved but for those accursed bars !" said one man—"there is a ladder."

"The ante-room window has no bars !" said

another; "I suppose if one saved her, the reward would be something that would make one comfortable for life."

"Pshaw! man, the ante-room is in a blaze," growled the other. But at that moment a ladder was placed to that very ante-room window; a young man, seizing a wetted plaid, which some humane person handed to him, and flinging it around him, darted up the ladder, opened the ante-room window, amid the huzzas and shrieks of the crowd; unscathed, the hero caught Angelina in his arms, wrapped her in the plaid, bore her unharmed, untouched, down the ladder, and carried her at once, fainting as she was, into a neighbouring house, which was open to receive her.

When Angelina opened her eyes, she found herself on a couch—George Darnly bending over her.

"Oh George! my poor mother, poor Fichu!" she exclaimed, as he caught her to his heart—forgetting in that hour all but his love.

"They are safe—they are in this house, my love! my long-lost love!" said George.

When hearts understand each other, few words are necessary; in a few minutes all was explained; and before Angelina went upstairs to seek her mother and Fichu, all was told, all explained, all forgiven; and Angelina had promised, on George's bosom, to give her hand only where she could give her heart, and to let the Duke of Dartmoor know that the only man she had ever loved, and who had saved her life, at the risk of his own, claimed her as his bride.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE REENCOUNTER.

It was not merely for the recovery of his health that George Darnly had obtained leave of absence. The "Viper" had found its way to the spot where he dwelt, and cruelly as he believed he had been treated by Angelina, he loved her still—loved her with that deep, protecting love, which made it impossible to him to sit down patiently abroad, while she was the object of so much unmanly calumny and cowardly attack at home. For the purpose, then, of chastising the reptile who had so out-

raged his first, though, he believed, faithless love, and in the hope of protecting her from any further outrage of the same kind, the young Captain (still weak from a severe and recent wound) crossed the wide ocean, and arrived in London.

He had not been in London two days, before, coming out of the Viper office in Piccadilly, George, accompanied by a fellow officer, met Mc.Quibble. The streets were full, and Mc.Quibble bowed and smiled, when George, with great apparent politeness, approaching him, said: "Captain Mc.Quibble, you remember Captain Darnly?"

"Oh, perfectly—fresh from India?"

"Exactly; the Viper has found its way there. I fancy these articles are yours." And taking the paper from his pocket, George pointed them out.

"They are," said Mc.Quibble, "and richly deserved, for they are aimed at the most accursed

little jilt. But I believe, if report says true, you know that as well as I do."

"I know," said George, pale with rage, "that you are a mean and cowardly ruffian, and as such I chastise you for your base and dastardly attack on the daughter of my friend, whose only error has been the ever admitting into her presence a creature so utterly despicable as yourself."

So saying, George, with a vigorous arm, seized the little Captain by the collar, and with a horsewhip he had provided for the purpose, administered a thrashing so severe, that Mc. Quibble had experienced no pain so acute since the last thrashing he had at school, for a libel on his master's daughter. George then flung him his card and walked away.

In the evening Mc. Quibble's "friend" called—George's friend met him—and a meeting was arranged for the next morning.

George, in spite of all he had done, was no cold-blooded duelist, and the night before the

meeting was with him, as with all sensitive and good men, one of great misery and even remorse. To get rid of some of the hours of sickening suspense and self-reproach, George strolled out in the spring morning, and "a spirit in his feet led him to gaze perhaps for the last time on the home where dwelt his first and only love, and the room where she slept. We have traced the providential result of that watch; and when George left Angelina in company with her mother, Fichu, and Truelove, whom Fichu had saved, it was to repair with his second to the place of meeting.

No one who marked George's firm step, and resolute though pallid lip, could have believed that he had just left a scene of so much peril, and had been a few minutes before on the brink of a dreadful death.

For some time Captain George Darnly and Sir Gregory Flint, his second, paced impatiently up and down the appointed field on Primrose Hill—looked at their watches—and wondered.

In this unpleasant manner an hour passed away, and then a cab appeared in sight.

To George's surprise, it contained only one gentleman—a miserable looking author, one Mr. Plagiar; he came to express his great regret that the gentlemen should have been kept waiting; but the fact was, the Captain's courage, like Bob Acres's, had oozed out at his finger's ends; and when he, Mr. Plagiar, called to accompany him to the field, he found Mc.Quibble off, and a note to say that he considered Darnly beneath his notice—that he should probably, on his return, prosecute him for an assault, but in the mean time he was off to America. As nothing else was to be done, the three gentlemen breakfasted merrily together, and then George Darnly, with a lighter heart, repaired to inquire after Miss Luxmore.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DENOUEMENT.

Days and weeks passed on, and the Duke of Dartmoor came not. At length, one day, when Angelina, in the house where she had taken refuge, was sitting with George Darnly and Truelove—Mrs. Luxmore having been confined to her bed since the accident—a letter was put into Angelina's hand, and she trembled and turned pale, for she recognised the writing of Dartmoor. The letter ran thus.

"Angelina, farewell! The wretched outcast who now addresses you, is not, as he always believed, the Duke of Dartmoor—he is a miserable child of infamy and poverty; but in this bitter hour, of all he resigns—wealth, rank, influence, station—all he really regrets is that he is no longer worthy to gaze at the only being he ever loved, and that every feeling of honour and of virtue would call upon him to resign her, even were she, angel as she is, to cling to the miserable outcast. Inclosed you will find a copy of the deposition of those engaged in the cruel conspiracy of which I am the innocent victim. Angelina! I can see you no more. If you have a word of comfort to address to me, direct F. D., Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden; but do not seek to see me—it would only unman, perhaps madden, me."

The deposition ran as follows.

"I, Susan Saveall, monthly nurse, do hereby

confess that, in conjunction with the late Duchess of Dartmoor, and Mr. Merton, of ———, Surgeon, &c. &c., I did, a few hours after his birth, change the infant son of the late Duke and Duchess of Dartmoor, which was to all appearance at the point of death, for the new-born boy of a young woman, a protégée of the late Duchess, who had been seduced and abandoned, and who was privately confined in a cottage in the Park within a few hours of her Grace. As her Grace was advanced in life, and her infant was a posthumous one, she evinced the most poignant mortification at the announcement, that the infant Duke was at its last gasp. She was a proud, a cruel, and an ambitious lady, to say nothing of her avarice and love of power. She had heard from me of the safe delivery and robust health of her protégée's baby, and being ever a schemer, she immediately proposed to me, to contrive at night, and unknown to the mother, to exchange

the infants, and to place her, as she believed, dead boy in the cradle of the poor young mother. This I was the better able to accomplish, because I was constantly going backwards and forwards, with articles of food and clothing for the poor girl. The exchange was effected, and when I looked for the last time on the infant Duke as he lay beside the sleeping girl, I believed that life was extinct in his little frame.

The Duchess seemed quite consoled when she pressed to her bosom one who would, as her son, secure to her so much of wealth, power, and importance ; but the change did not escape the searching gaze of Mr. Merton. However, he was a man of no principle ; he had his price, as I had mine, and that price the Duchess paid. It was some time before I was able to get out and inquire after the young mother, and the dead child, for before the expiration of the month, a milk fever carried off the guilty

Duchess, and Mr. Merton and myself alone knew the secret so disgraceful to us both. When at length I was able to inquire at the cottage, to my horror and surprise (for I was not all evil), I discovered that the babe had rallied; possibly the poor young woman had proved a better nurse than the wicked Duchess; and she was gone away with the infant, none knew whither. But it was rumoured that, in her despair and distress, she had exposed it in the grounds of the good Mr. Luxmore—an angel on earth, whose cousin it was who had seduced and forsaken her—and that the excellent Squire Luxmore had adopted both mother and child. For many years I succeeded in driving from my mind this nefarious transaction; but the approach of age, and the presence of disease, awaken conscience, to appease which I make this confession. Mr. Merton, now resident at Boulogne, can be easily found, confronted with me, and compelled to acknowledge the truth of my statement, which I affirm on

oath ; and wherever the young man known by the name of George Darnly may be found, in him will be found the lawful son of the late Duke and Duchess of Dartmoor ; and whenever and wherever the present so-called Duke of Dartmoor is found, in him will be found the bastard son of Alice Darnly and Cecil Luxmore—changed by me, at the request and for the bribe of the late Duchess of Dartmoor, assisted by Mr. Merton, her Grace’s medical man, who discovered the fraud, and whose silence was bought by her Grace.

“ By my hopes of mercy, I swear to the truth of this confession, which I make to ease my own soul—and so help me God ! ”

As Angelina and her lover concluded this bewildering and astounding document, the young man—so suddenly become in every way worthy of the object of his long and boundless love—so suddenly raised from undeserved disgrace and unmerited reproach, to the foremost

rank among the nobles of the land—changed, beneath Angelina's tearful gaze, from a burning flush to a ghastly pallor—closed his eyes, and sunk fainting at her feet.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WOMAN'S HEART.

When George Duke of Dartmoor (for such he now unquestionably was, though he had yet to substantiate his claim) recovered from a swoon, which proved in one like him, not the weakness, but the strength of his passion, Angelina reminded him that she could not thus forsake the unhappy but devoted man who had so loved her—and that although she had been ready to sacrifice the Duke of Dartmoor to George Darnly, the case was altered now, and that every feeling of honour and pity called

upon her to do her utmost to comfort the out-cast, in his ineffable anguish.

George, truly good and great, agreed with her; and Angelina, despising prudish scruples at such a time, entered a hackney coach and drove with George to the Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden. But there a dreadful shock awaited her. In reply to his inquiries, the pale and trembling waiter drew George aside, and with unspeakable horror George learnt that the object of his search, we will hope in a madness brought on by despair, had that very morning shot himself through the heart.

George's silence and horror-stricken countenance told Angelina, plainly as words could do, the dreadful tidings; and in tears and silence they returned home.

A few weeks would perhaps have reconciled the unhappy Frederick to his fate, for on the death of a father and uncle, on whom he was dependent, Mr. Cecil Luxmore owned to a clandestine marriage with poor Alice Darnly,

who, with a patient forbearance, and a perfect faith not unusual in woman's heart, had kept through so many years of trial, poverty, contumely, and scorn, the secrecy she had promised when he made her his.

And George Duke of Dartmoor, (poor Frederick being gone) soon proved and established his claims—claims which Mr. Merton was unable to deny, and therefore made a merit of substantiating—stipulating for some pecuniary assistance, and connivance at his escape to America.

And Duke of Dartmoor though he was, he still cherished, with a son's fondness and respect, her whom he had looked upon so long as his mother, and who, believing him her own, disproved the poetical and romantic theory of the force of blood, by a tenderness and a constancy seldom equalled in the records of maternity.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FINALE.

“All tragedies are ended by a death, all comedies are finished by a marriage.” The spring had mellowed into summer, and the summer had ripened into autumn—Mr. Luxmore, somewhat restored to health, and cheered by the company of his child, who, with Eva Morris, and George Duke of Dartmoor, had repaired to Italy to fetch him, arrived at Luxmore Park to celebrate the wedding of his child. The world, ever false in its judgments, thought the bride-elect had shown a marvellous facility

for transferring her heart to the actual Duke of Dartmoor, but what does the world know of these matters?

The desertion of *l'ami de la maison*, who had recently married Miss Cynthia Papillon, of fifty, had sunk deep into Mrs. Luxmore's heart, and as she was not all evil, she resolved to do her best to recover her only lawful throne, her husband's heart. Miss Cynthia Papillon, *en passant* be it said, proved to be possessed indeed of the silver of more than fifty winters; but the fifty thousand golden charms ascribed to her were not forthcoming. Sir Jonquil had invested them in a bank which broke, and *l'ami de la maison* found himself burthened with a very ugly, very ill-tempered, harmless wife of fifty-five! Can poetical justice require a harsher doom for him?

And Eva returned to divide her sweet attentions and her gentle intellectual converse, between the Luxmores, and the happy, happy pair!

The wedding was a private one; the romantic and even terrible story connected with it made them both desire to have none but true friends present at the ceremony, and when that is the case the party must be very small.

On the evening before their marriage, George and Angelina were seated together in the old arbour at Luxmore Park, Truelove nestling in the bosom of the bride-elect, and the young Duke playing with the jealousy of the watchful bird, when General Dunkeld of Darkside, the only guest, except Eva Morris, drew near, and said in a solemn voice: "Poor victims! Don't you wish your trials over, and that death instead of marriage awaited you?"

"It were sweet certainly to die thus," said George, pressing Angelina to his side!

"No, not sweet! nothing is sweet, but perhaps it might be less bitter, less unbearable than the constant squabbles and miseries of wedded life. Well, I wish you both safe at your journey's end—and that we were all at rest for

ever, which, though, I believe we shall never be—never, never.

“How those ravens croak!” said George smilingly to Angelina—“Come, my love, they make us sad.”

“Poor victims!” groaned Dunkeld—“and to see them smile, it breaks my heart—oh that we were all at peace for ever.”

And as at this moment, the auld Leddy Mc. Grigor drew near, in more than wonted state, to converse with him on the prospects of her grandchild, the Duchess, and her grandson the Duke—General Dunkeld rapidly concealed himself behind a cypress tree, and consoled himself with composing an elegy in lieu of an epithalamium.

And at peace George and Angelina are—the ineffable peace of those whose union is not merely that of the hands, but of the soul, the taste, the heart, the every feeling.

With a husband whose character had been formed in the school of Adversity, and having

herself proved how vain is the world, its praises and its pleasures—warned by the fate of poor Frederick not to love that world too well—and beholding in her mother the unpitied woes of one who depended too entirely on fleeting beauty and the mere fleeting homage of man—Angelina, now in her turn the mother of little maidens, promisingly lovely, takes great care they shall not, though born beauties, be bred as such; and guided by Eva Morris, and her good and noble George, lovelier than ever, because lovely without vanity, in dignified retirement and wedded happiness now glides smoothly on “The Life of a Beauty.”

FINIS.

